

# China

O U R I S M

## ***Truth of the Women's Kingdom***

***Beijing – the Heart of One Billion***

***Enchanting Qinghai Lake • The Land of Snow***



197

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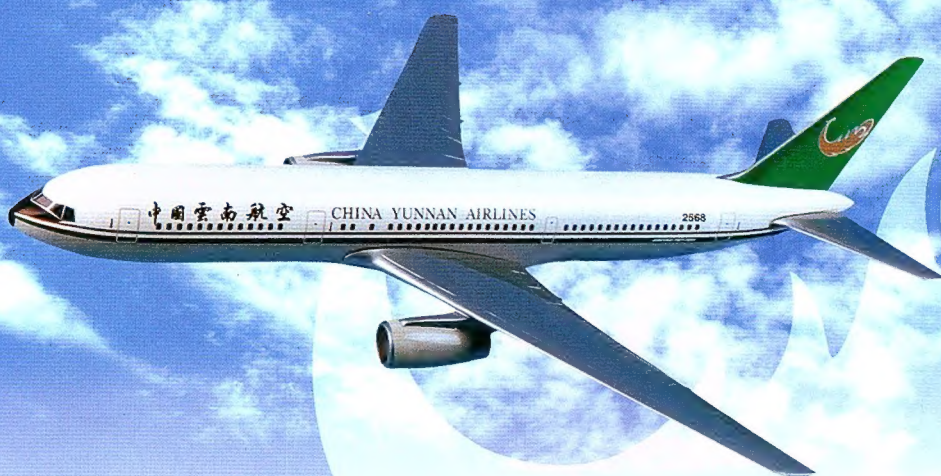
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In 1985, the first Boeing 737 – 300 aircraft was introduced into the company, and today it makes up its whole fleet. From August 3rd this year, the Boeing 767 – 300 will also be available to the public. The company has opened 49 domestic and international air routes. Their destinations include Singapore, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and many other cities in Southeast Asia.

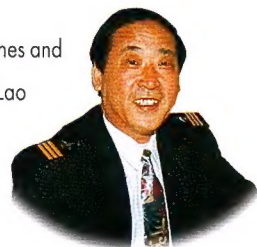
Beside Kunming International Airport, the CAAY also administrates airports such as Xishuangbanna, Simao, Mangshi, Baoshan, Dali, Lijiang and Zhaotong.

In 1994, China Yunnan Airlines and Laos National Airlines Co. Ltd. set up a joint venture – Lao Aviation, which is the first joint venture in China civil aviation history, and is also the landmark for the internationalization of China Yunnan Airlines.

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# C O N T E N T S

NO. 197 DECEMBER 1996



## LANDSCAPES

### The Charm of Qinghai Lake

8

*Photos by Wang Jianjun and Tan Ming*

*Article by Yu Lan*

Qinghai Lake, China's largest inland lake, is like a mirror imbedded in lush verdure, looking both mysterious and enchanting.



## HIGHLIGHTS

### Winter Fun in the Land of Snow

22

*Photos by Shi Baoxiu, Xie Guanghui and Huang Yanhong*

*Article by Yu Ket Choi*

Do you plan to visit the land of snow this winter? We lead you to Northeast China to enjoy a series of activities in a silvery world.



## DISCOVERIES

### Insight into the Mosuo Community

44

*Photos and Story by Gai Mingsheng*

*Edited by Huang Yanhong*

A male photographer entered the Lugu Lake area and befriended the Mosuo people who live in the "Women's Kingdom". His photos and stories tell of this matriarchal society.



## FROM THE EDITOR

### Sincerity Comes from the Heart

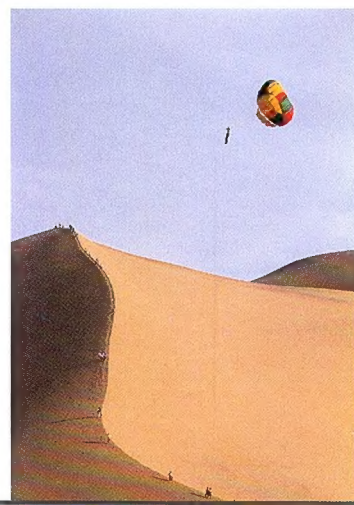
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## EXPERIENCES

### Journey to Jiaozi Snow Mountain

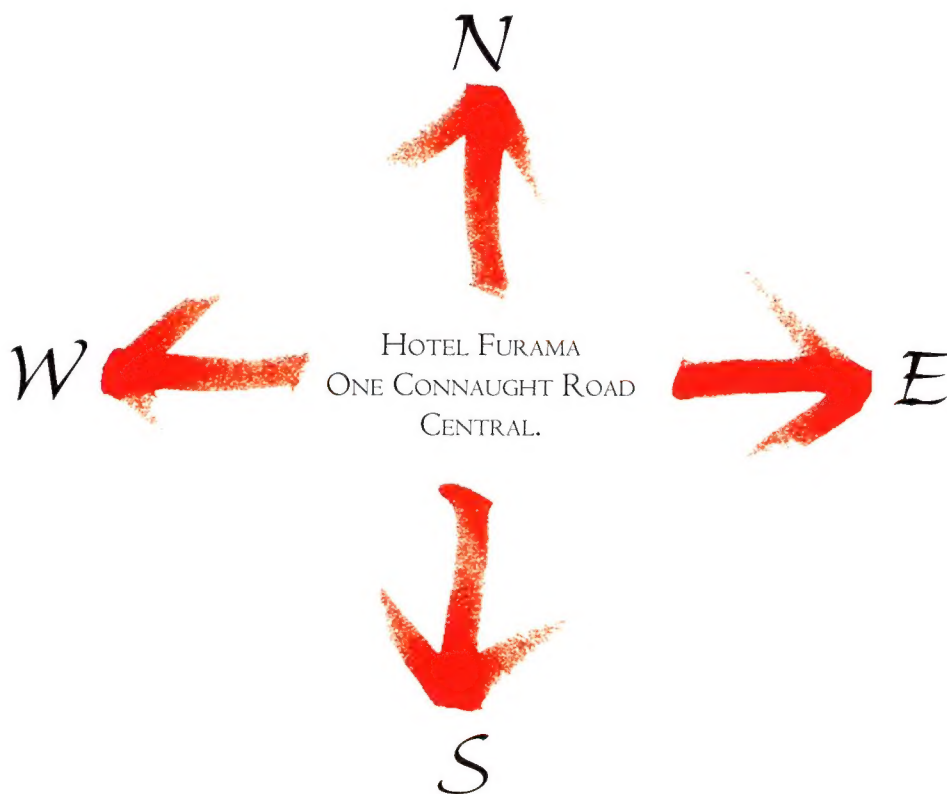
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*Photos and Article by Andrea Stelzner*





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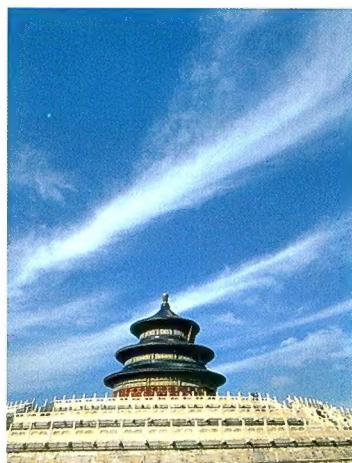
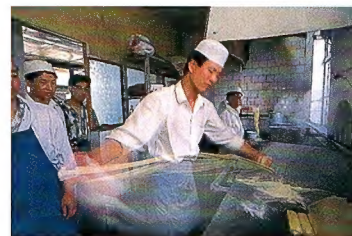
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# C O N T E N T S

NO. 197 DECEMBER 1996



## ACTION

### Playing on the Fantastic Sand Dunes

76

*Photos and Article by Xie Guanghui*

In twilight, our traveller finds himself a heap of fun on Mingsha Hills, which is actually a group of sand dunes near Dunhuang, Gansu Province – riding a camel to emulate the feeling of travelling on the ancient Silk Road, running barefooted and parachuting are just some of antics he got up to.

## FOCUS

### Xing Liang Kun and His Ceramic World

68

*Photos by Wang Dabin*

*Article by Hong Yan and Wang Dabin*

## CUISINE

### Spicy Beef Noodles – Lanzhou Flavour

*Photos by Xie Guanghui*

*Article by He Xiaozu*

This dish is so important to the local people's dinner table that, as they say, they feel frustrated if they don't have a bowl of beef noodles at least every three days.

72

## CITY PROFILE

### Beijing – the Heart of One Billion

54

*Photos by Wang Wenbo*

*Article by Gloria Shang*

Tourists to Beijing are usually attracted by the Forbidden City, the Great Wall and many other cultural relics. Today, in Beijing, they will see a grand capital in transition, a blend of ancient and modern, East and West. Meeting the people there they can feel the heartbeat of the 1.2 billion Chinese.

## UPDATE

84

## NEXT ISSUE

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Front Cover: Women of Lugu Lake



Gai Ming Sheng



# THE CHARM OF QINGHAI LAKE

## *A Mirror Imbedded in Lush Verdure*

Embraced by the Riyue (Sun and Moon) Mountain, the lake's mirror-like surface creates a surreal effect looking at the same time mysterious and enchanting as the wind rises sending ripples rolling gently towards the rich verdure on the shore, where golden rape fields lie interlaced with dark green ginkgo barley.

Some one million years ago a movement in the earth's crust created a high dam cutting off the outlet to the Qinghai Lake, turning it into China's largest inland lake. In ancient times it was known as Western Sea.

Originally the Qinghai Lake was a fresh-water lake, but long years of evaporation and the constant infiltration of minerals gradually turned it into a salt water lake, a fact evidenced in part by the presence of the huso sturgeon which only lives in salt water.

## *Shifting Scenes on Bird Island*

The main attraction on the Bird Island in the western part of the Qinghai Lake is the migratory birds who propagate and spend their summer here, or just stop over before resuming their flight north or south. The coming and going of various species of bird composes the shifting scenes on the lake.

Late spring sees a myriad of birds tightly jammed within the narrow confines of the island. They busy themselves building nests, hatching, chirping, preening, or whatnot. At the slightest provocation they take flight, and the sky is darkened as they swirl about like black clouds scudding the air.

In late autumn brown-headed gulls and greater black-headed gulls take their leave, and the space they have evacuated is immediately taken up by wild geese and other new arrivals. As winter sets in, white swans replace the geese as the masters of the island.

This is indeed a paradise of birds, where, despite their wide variety, all the birds appear to live congenially together. Seeming to have been intoxicated with the chanting mountains and waters, the birds compete with one another in displaying their colourful plumes and pleasant chirping, adding more colour and lustre to the already charming scenery of the Bird Island.

Article by Yu Lan

Translated by Ling Yuan







































## TIPS FOR TRAVELLERS

As China's leading inland lake, Qinghai Lake covers an area of 4,456 square kilometres and has a perimeter of 360 kilometres, twice as big as the Taihu in Jiangsu Province. At an altitude of 3,260 metres above sea level, the lake is twice as high as Mount Tai. Because of this, the area is cool in all seasons. In summer it is a good holiday resort, with temperatures averaging as low as 15°C. It gets chilly at night so take warm clothing.

Lying in the north-east of the Qinghai Plateau, Qinghai Lake is surrounded by tall mountains. A vast expanse of flat, fertile grassland extends from the foot of the mountains to its shore.

At the centre of the lake, Haixin Mountain,

hundreds of rocks it looks most beautiful in summer when flowers stand out in a riot of colour. The island can be reached by pleasure boats which can be rented at the shore.

Located in the north-west corner of the Qinghai Lake, Bird Island itself is made up of two parts: the western part is known as Haixi Hill, a tiny 0.11 square kilometre area in the shape of a camel's hump. Despite its size it is home to tens of thousands of brown-headed and greater black-headed gulls. In spring the island is strewn with heaps of bird eggs so tightly packed together as to make walking on the island a very difficult proposition. Hence its nickname, "Egg Island". The other part, occupying 4.6 square kilometres is known as Haixipi. It is linked with Haixi Island by a gentle slope and is the natural habitat of more than a thousand cormorants.

The tourist season at the Qinghai Lake lasts from May through August. During this period the shore looks its seasonal best, with golden patches of rape blossom mingling with an endless stretch of green barley fields, while cattle and sheep graze unhurriedly in the meadows.

Buses run directly to the lake's shore from Xining, capital of Qinghai Province. The bus line to Bird Island is at its busiest during the period when spring gives way to summer. Hotels built in the style of Mongolian yurts are available close to Bird Island.

*Edited by Chang Tian*

*Translated by Ling Yuan*



Photos by:  
Wang Jianjun (No. 8, 10, 14)  
Guo Zhiwei (No. 9)  
Tan Ming (No. 12, 16, 17)

a one-square-kilometre island protrudes 30 kilometres from the southern shore. Studded with



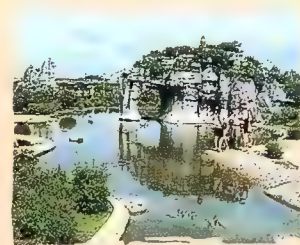
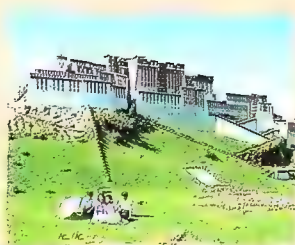
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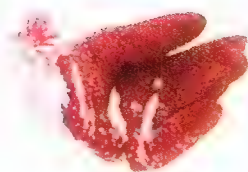
SINCERITY COMES  
FROM THE HEART



# Location Map for Winter Sports







# WINTER FUN IN THE LAND OF SNOW

Those who live in the south seldom have an opportunity to marvel at the scenes of ice and snow which exist in the North.

What exactly does the world of snow look like? Is it just a vast blanket of white? What does snow feel like? Is "soft" the only word to describe it?

Those who have been to snow-covered places probably know the answers, but for those who haven't and are itching for the experience may get some idea from this article.

They will find the land of snow is rather energising, instead of shuddering at the mere thought that it is icy and cold.

*Photos by Shi Baoxiu, Xie Guanghui and Huang Yanhong*

*Article by Yee Ket Choi*











## RIMED TREES – ONE OF NATURE'S WONDERS

One is compelled by an indescribable urge to take one of the glistening, crystalline twigs and bring it to the mouth, as if it were an ice popsicle.

Rime occurs when super cooled water droplets strike trees and other objects, at a temperature below freezing. It is one of the four major natural phenomena particular to China. Jilin, capital of Jilin Province in Northeast China, has one of the most exhilarating scenes of rimed trees.

Lost in the silvery, rime-crustured woods, one is compelled by an indescribable urge to take one of the glistening, crystalline twigs and bring it to the mouth, as if it were an ice popsicle.

Jilin is skirted by mountains, with the Songhua River zigzagging its way through the city proper. In winter, the entire river is frozen over, except for the stretch from downtown to a power plant dam 24 four kilometres away. Along this section the temperature of the water warms up after flowing through the power plant. The result is clouds of mist containing water droplets. Upon meeting the cold air above the river, the droplets disperse and deposit themselves on the trees along the shore. Gradually, the tree branches become encrusted with rime, and the river becomes hemmed in by a picturesque silvery corridor of glistening trees which extends for scores of kilometres.

At sunset, the river sleeps under a blanket of mist, and water droplets begin settling on the tree branches; the environment is enveloped in dense fog, and the rime continues to produce ever thickening branches. As the sun rises in the sky, the fog disperses, and the rime begins to flutter down from the trees like feathers. Water drips down, and the crust of rime on their branches shrinks; when the sun reaches its zenith the entire spectacle disappears before one even realises it has gone. Early morning is the best time to marvel at the rimed trees, which glisten with an inviting metallic sheen. Rimed trees are seen in Jilin during the period from mid-November to late March, but particularly during January and February.

**ACCOMMODATION** Tourist hotels are numerous in Jilin City.

**TRANSPORT** Convenient.

Jilin is linked with Changchun by both railway and highway.

**TRAVEL SEASON** January and February

**CLOES TEMPERATURES** -15°C to -20°C

Trees laden with hoarfrost (by Lang Qi)





A gorgeous sunset over the frozen Songjiang River, Heilongjiang (by Xu Xuezhong)

## MERE MINUTES TO CROSS THE SONGHUA

Beyond the poplar trees, a thick layer of snow has already settled on the land, its whiteness producing an idyllic and tranquil setting.

Heilongjiang Province is criss-crossed by rivers and studded with lakes. The low alluvial Sanjiang (Three-River) Plain lies nestled in the arms of the Heilongjiang, Songhua, and Wusuli rivers.

The 831-kilometre-long Songhua River flows past the northern edge of the city of Harbin. In early winter, the river is not yet frozen, but

beyond the poplar trees which line the banks of the river, a thick layer of snow has already settled on the land, its whiteness producing an idyllic and tranquil setting. A stroll by the river, in the company of a good friend, or alone, proves to be a most romantic experience.

All the rivers in the three northeast provinces freeze in deep winter. The most eye-catching changes take place on the Songhua River, which flows through the two major cities of Jilin and Harbin while the Mudan River meanders its way through the city of Mudanjiang. Many visitors to Harbin are impressed by the fact that the Songhua River solidifies into a glistening belt, so that a trip across the river takes mere minutes.

**Accommodation** Many hotels and guesthouses are available in Harbin.

**Transportation** Frequent flights and trains from Beijing.

**Best Time to Visit** January and February

**Temperature** -25°C to -30°C



# UNUSUAL CHARM OF THE SNOW SCENE

Open your arms and throw yourself face down into the snow, and you get the feeling of flinging yourself onto a bed made of soft eiderdown.

Northeast China is called "the land of snow" and it is here that the most majestic snow scenes can be found – everything is covered under a thick blanket of snow – rooftops, tree branches, telephone poles.... As the snow drifts down it is evocative of a sylphlike lass, and it seldom melts. The snowy land contains a variety of shifting scenes extending into the forests, it evinces a feeling of sanctity and settled repose.

The Shuangfeng Forestry Farm, tucked deep away in mountains,



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close by Mudanjiang, Heilongjiang Province, is accessible only by a narrow-gauge train from Changding. Due to the effect of cold arctic air currents, and of the micro climate associated with the vegetation, each winter snow falls on this farm earlier and heavier than anywhere else in China.

The snow scene of Shuangfeng Farm is not simply a place for the sightseer; it is more of a challenge. Trudging through the knee-deep snow calls for awkward body movements and is quite strenuous. Alternatively, open your arms and throw yourself face down into the snow, and you get the feeling of flinging yourself onto a bed made of soft eiderdown – feeling cold is alien to the entire experience. Endless rolling on this boundless "bed", is made all the more enchanting by the snow flakes drifting down gently through the air.

The month of March receives the heaviest snow, with visibility reduced to less than ten metres, and the snow layer is as deep as one metre.

Remote places like Shuangfeng Forestry Farm are a dime a dozen in this land of forest and snow; except that the narrow-gauge train forms part of an added attraction to people from the outside world.

- ACCOMMODATION** Stay either in the forestry farm's guesthouse or with a local family.
- TRANSPORT** Take a train from Mudanjiang to alight at Changding, then change to the narrow-gauge train.
- BEST SEASON** February and March
- LOWEST TEMPERATURES** -15°C to -20°C

1. Snowy scene embellished by the colourful lanterns hung at the doors of houses in a Heilongjiang forest farm (by Peng Zhengge)
2. Rows of houses "smoke together" in the forest. (by Peng Zhengge)
3. Snow-covered roofs (by Wang Fucheng)





Cool looking but hot-blooded: the hot springs of the frosted Mt. Changbai (by Shi Baoxiu)

## CHANGBAI MOUNTAINS: HOT SPRINGS IN WINTER

The entire area is smothered by dense mists.

The Changbai Mountains situated in south-east Jilin Province is renowned for its dense forests, bewitching surroundings, and unique snow-bound tourist attractions. But its chief attractions are the Tianchi Lake and the hot springs. The entire area is smothered by dense mists, in fact, you see nothing but the white, soothing mists....

The Tianchi Lake nestles in the embrace of precipitous cliffs. Its water gushes through a gap between the Tianwen and Longmen Peaks on its northern side to form a graceful waterfall with a mighty drop of 68 metres. As a result, the crashing waters send up plumes of spray and the valley is forever veiled behind an ethereal mist.

The second attraction is the area between the lower reaches of the waterfall and the Changbai Mountain Villa which is strewn with hot springs emitting piping hot water recorded as high as 80°C. The entire area is smothered by dense mists and the river never freezes over because of the warm vapours released by the springs. These hot

springs are within walking distance from the villa, which can be reached by bus from Erdao Baihe, where the railway station serves trains coming from Jilin.

- ACCOMMODATION** Many villas and holiday resorts are available at the foot of Changbai
- MOUNTAINS** The Ice and Snow Sports Centre at Shankou also provide lodging.
- TRANSPORT** Take the train from Jilin City and alight at Erdao Baihe, then take a bus to the Changbai Mountain Villa. The hot springs are within walking distance.
- TRAVEL SEASON** March and April
- BEST TEMPERATURES** -5°C to -10°C



# NARROW-GAUGE TRAIN IN A SNOWY LAND

The toy-like narrow-gauge train offers convenience and warmth to people living in the vast land of snow.

The toy-like narrow-gauge train, offers convenience and warmth to people living in the vast land of snow.

The locomotive puffs out white steam as the toy-like narrow-gauge train trundles past factories, forest farms and mines scattered on the vast land of snow. For the local people, the train is the only means of transportation for shopping, visiting friends or commuting to and from work; a close relationship exists between the conductors and passengers who are as close as neighbours or fellow workers.

The train is always punctual, no matter how many passengers there are. In Langxiang Township in the Lesser Hinggan Mountains such trains offer convenience to those wanting to venture into the depths of the forest. It chugs along slowly, passing through tunnels, working its way laboriously up mountain slopes and making sharp turns along mountain trails. Passengers are able to embark and disembark wherever they want. Apart from passengers, the train also transports timber and other native products out of the forests. Langxiang can be reached from Harbin by train or bus.



Hotels are available at Langxiang Township.



Take a long-distance bus from Harbin to Langxiang.



During Spring Festival



-15°C to -20°C

1. The locomotive of the mini-train (by Peng Zhengze)

2. The mini-train draws tourists. (by Shi Baoxiu)

3. The mini-train transports both people and goods. (by Shi Baoxiu)





# WINTER SPORTS, AN ENERGISING PASTIME

On the frozen Songhua River colourful "sailing boats" are seen gliding across its surface. In fact, they are wind surfing boards fitted with metal skates.



As winter sets in, the rivers and lakes in Heilongjiang and Jilin provinces become ideal grounds for winter sports, including ice hockey, ice sleighing, figure skating, speed skating and skiing.

The Ice Sports Centre of Jilin, situated on the southern bank of the Songhua River, is complete with a skating ring, a training hall and a speed-skating course.

The city also operates a large ski centre, known as the Songhua Lake High Mountain Skiing Ground, approximately 16 kilometres from downtown. Two ski courses have been carved into the 930-metre-tall main peak to meet international standards, and the S-shaped slalom course is about three kilometres in length. Cable-cars whisk the skiers off to the mountain top in about 20 minutes. Instructors are employed to help novice skiers.

The Qingyun Skiing Centre in Shangzhi County, Heilongjiang

Province, is yet another major ski facility in China. Skiers may take the train from Harbin to Shangzhi County and reach the ski centre by minibus. Situated at an altitude of 500 metres with snow as thick as 50 centimetres, the facility features a 116-kilometre cross-country ski course which threads its way through small villages, beautiful forests and across rivers. Besides enjoying the beautiful landscape, the skier can also learn about the customs of the local people.

Harbin operates a number of sizeable ice sports grounds. Sun Island on the Songhua River, is a famed scenic spot reached by minibus from the city proper; it is a major ice sports centre in winter. Another ideal place is in the Cultural Park – here fans of ice hockey and skating can participate in, or watch, the competitions held on its modern ice ring.

On the frozen Songhua River colourful "sailing boats" are seen gliding across its surface. In fact, they are wind surfing boards fitted underneath with metal skates. With the help of the wind they can reach speeds of up to 50 kilometres per hour. Figure skating is another popular sport on the river, whose wide open space provides lots of room to manoeuvre.

**TRAVEL SEASON** December and March

**WINTER TEMPERATURES** -20°C to -30°C

1. Snow motorcycle (Su Changde)
2. Wind-sailing on the frosted Songhua River (by Xie Guanghui)
3. Playing ice-hockey (by Xie Guanghui)





# WINTER SWIMMING, DARE DEVILS' GAME

Even under freezing temperatures, dare devils jump into the river to do a few laps; some are even courageous enough to perform diving stunts.



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**WINTER SWIMMING SEASON** From Spring Festival to the Lantern Festival  
**WATER TEMPERATURE** -10°C to -15°C



3

The chilly winds of Harbin have never discouraged the city's numerous winter swimming fans. In the centre of the Songhua River is a swimming pool 25 metres by 10 metres, at one end is a metre-high platform made of ice slabs. During the period from November to March the temperature on the river drops to -20°C, sometimes plunging far below -30°C. The temperature of the water however stays at -1 to -2°C. It is amazing to hear that even under such freezing temperatures, some dare devils jump into the river to do a few laps; some are even courageous enough to perform diving stunts.



1. The cold does not deter the old (by Xie Guanghui)
2. The swimmers appear hardened to the harsh cold. (by Shi Baoxiu)
3. Time for the divers to show off (by Xie Guanghui)
4. Digging a swimming pool in an iced-over lake (by Xie Guanghui)



# YANGGE DANCING, A POPULAR MERRY-MAKING ACTIVITY

They dance when and where they feel like it.



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1. A mix of Eastern tradition with Western fantasy. (by Peng Zhengze)
2. Happy Yangge dancers (by Xie Guanghui)
3. The sweet smell of tangyuan makes the Yangge dancers' mouths water. (by Peng Zhengze)
4. Yangge dancers walk on stilts (by Peng Zhengze)



Yangge is the name of a group dance popular among the Han people in the north-east. During Spring Festival, the streets of Harbin, Langxiang, Taoshan and Mudanjiang are turned into stages to accommodate Yangge dance shows. Characterised by bold and untrammelled steps and costumes in exaggerated designs and bright colours, the Yangge dance is pleasing to both the eye and the mind. The dancers play the roles of legendary figures, such as Monkey King, Piggie, the Tang Monk, Friar Sand, the spirits of black and white snakes, the butterfly lovers, and Lord Jiang and Judge Bao Zheng. Those who do not play any roles beautify themselves with powder and rouge and beautiful costumes. The show is brought to a climax when spectators mingle with the dancers for a fresh round of boogying or taking pictures with the dancers.

A new street scene in Harbin is Yangge Dance performed by women in their sixties or seventies. These veteran women form their own teams for the purpose of keeping fit. They take to the streets whenever they feel like it. It does not matter to them whether it is the dancing season, a holiday, or not.



4



# THE FUN OF SPORTING ON THE ICE

Despite the obvious risks, visitors vie with each other for thrills – naturally there are more failures than successes.



There are many people who are not afraid of the bitter cold of winter. Residents in the Northeast preoccupy themselves with a diversity of winter sports, such as skating, horse-drawn sleighing and sleigh jumping which is an indigenous sport in Harbin. A platform rises more than ten metres above the river surface, from where a sleigh can launch itself as far as 40 metres. Of course, great skill is required to keep the sleigh on course and upright. Despite the obvious risks, visitors vie with each other for the thrill of it – naturally there are more failures than successes.

Skating is another popular sport on the Songhua River. For many, sporting a pair of skates on the river provides hours of fun. Others may enjoy riding on a cart drawn by a horse, donkey or dog. A stroll on the slippery ice, too, proves a unique experience, which is made all the more unforgettable if one happens to trip over a few times.



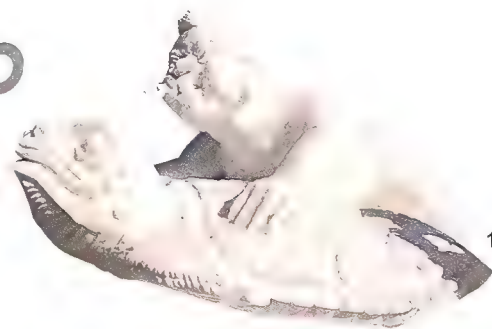
January and February  
-25°C to -30°C

1. Even falling down is enjoyable (by Shi Baoxiu)
2. Horse-drawn sleigh (by Zhang Cheng)
3. Having a good time on the slide courses dug out from the snow-field (by Xie Daoping)
4. The locals' home-made sleighs (by Shi Baoxiu)



# FASHIONING ICE BLOCKS INTO ARTISTIC LANTERNS

Ingeniously decorated with colourful lights, they form a picturesque ice-and-snow landscape art which integrates unique carving skills



The abundance of ice and snow has given rise to the art of ice sculpture which has a history of hundreds of years in Northeast China. At the beginning, ice was fashioned into functional lanterns for illumination; later, local residents developed the tradition of hanging ice lanterns on gates and in their courtyards primarily for illumination but also for decorative purposes.

Harbin is the venue of the annual large-scale ice lantern festival. Fans come from around the world to the city which is regarded as a Mecca for the Chinese art of ice and snow sculpting.

The Ice Lantern Festival is held in the seven-hectare Zhaolin Park at Zhaolin Street in Harbin's Daoli District, during the period which lasts from New Year's Day to mid-February. Lanterns carved out of natural ice slabs quarried from the frozen Songhua River are laid out in the park. Ingeniously decorated with colourful lights, they form a picturesque ice-and-snow landscape art which integrates unique carving skills with traditional lantern-making skills.

Ice sculpture covers a wide range of distinctive forms ranging from various lantern designs and carvings of flowers, miniature landscapes, architectural structures and ice-and-snow scenes.

In the category of ice flowers, the motifs range from flowers and trees to birds, animals, insects and fish. As evening falls and the lights are lit, the entire park is turned into a world of glistening lanterns and crystalline images, inspiring a dream-like feeling in the viewers.

The ice lanterns are either moulded or carved. For the making of small lanterns, water is poured into a mould, which is left in the open to freeze. Then electric lights are installed into the castings. For the large lanterns, ice slabs are piled up, and axes, saws and chisels are employed to carve the piles into images of animals, flowers, buildings, etc. Again, electric lighting illuminates them.

**TRAVEL SEASON** January and February

**LOWEST TEMPERATURES** -10°C and lower

1. Most of the entries in the ice sculpture competition in Harbin are of auspicious animals from Chinese folklore. (by Xie Guanghui)
2. The ice statue of a traffic policeman draws knowing smiles from passers-by, Harbin. (by Xie Guanghui)







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## TRAVELLING TIPS

- As protection against the cold, pack: an eiderdown filled jacket, woollen clothing (close-fitting type), thick sweater, fur cap, gloves, woollen socks, thick soled shoes or boots, gauze mask and ear muffs or buy them upon arrival where a wide variety of quality items are available at low prices.
- Guesthouses and hostels are equipped with heating systems that keep room temperatures higher than 20°C. Outdoor temperatures are between -20°C to -30°C. Exposure to extremes of temperatures makes one catch cold easily. Suitable heavy clothing and a supply of cold medicines are good measures.
- Lips crack easily in the cold, dry climate, so lipsalve is essential.
- Normally automatic cameras, especially those that run on button cells, stop working at -20°C. The shutter release simply does not respond when you press the button. Mechanical cameras or ones that run on high energy batteries or lithium cells are a must. If the camera stops working because of the harsh cold, warm it inside your clothes. When not in use, cameras should be kept in pockets of inner clothing.
- At -20°C, don't touch metal with your bare flesh: the skin may stick to the metal surface and gets torn off when you move.
- It is very slippery on the high hill roads and paths. As a precaution, tie ropes round the soles of your boots. You can also buy straw sandals from the stalls at scenic spots.

3. An ice sculpture of a dam at Longqing Gorge looks real. (by Wang Wenbo)

4. Ice sculptors busy themselves. (by Huang Yanhong)

5. Giant ice sculptures glisten in lights of all colours. (by Xie Guanghui)



# SNOW SCENES ON FAMOUS MOUNTAINS

There is plenty of cold air above interacting with the evaporation of the Yangtse River and Puyang Lake to form an ocean of clouds.



For snow lovers, Northeast China is not the only place to go. One can derive pleasure from any snow-capped mountain in central China. The Lushan Mountain is one.

Despite its location in the south, where weather tends to be warmer, Lushan has all the elements of winter – ice, snow, rime and so on. The unique ice and snow landform is attributed to the mountain's sheer height of 1,474 metres above sea level and its 99 peaks. Snow sets in during December, and lasts until early March the following year.

When the sky clears up right after a heavy snow storm, ravines and

peaks alike are shrouded in a silver blanket, while wisps of clouds float about the crystalline trees. The rime in the Lushan Mountain look even more spectacular than in Jilin for it is formed not only by the tiny water droplets carried in the mist – snow, rain and sleet all have a part to play in the beauty of the rimed trees on the Lushan Mountain.

A journey to the mountain usually begins at Jiujiang en route to the Yangtse River. Daily passenger boats between Shanghai and Hankou stop over at Jiujiang, and ferry boats operate between Hankou and Jiujiang as well. By land, there are various tourist buses in operation between Nanchang and the Lushan Mountain, and from Hankou to Jiujiang. Within the Lushan Mountain Scenic Zone transportation is convenient. At Guling Street buses are available to drive tourists to all the scenic spots and places of historical interest. Jiujiang also operates bus services to these places. Travel services in Nanchang organise special tours to the Lushan Mountain, Jiujiang, Shizhongshan (Stone-Drum Rock), Dragon Cave, etc.

**ACCOMMODATION** Hotels are available with convenient boarding.

**BEST VISITING SEASON** February and March

**WINTER TEMPERATURES** -15°C to -20°C

1. Mt. Lushan after a snowfall (provided by CTP)

2. The sea of clouds viewed from the snow-capped peak of Mt. Emei (by Huang Yanhong)





# A SNOWY RETREAT IN SICHUAN

It is the venue for activities such as ice sculpting, snow sightseeing, skiing, skating, and snowman building competitions.

It sounds unbelievable, but it is true: Driving for 80 kilometres from Chengdu, Sichuan Province, where snowfall is rarely seen, you find yourself in a land covered knee-deep with snow.

Longchi, or Dragon Lake, known for its unique micro climate attributed to its high altitude, is situated not far from the western suburbs of Chengdu. It can be reached by a bus which starts at the Western Gate Bus Station in Chengdu. The lake covers an area of 2,000 hectares, and the snow, 40-70 centimetres deep, stays for as long as four months each year. It is the venue of an annual three-month-long Ice and Snow Festival which features activities such as ice sculpturing, snow sightseeing, skiing, skating, and snowman building competitions.

During the ice and snow festival, the square in front of the Dujuan (Azalea) Mountain Villa is bedecked with lanterns, colourful streamers, snowmen and ice sculptures. Visitors can get lost in the fun of building snowmen and throwing snow balls at each other.



1

- LOCATION** Longchi, Sichuan Province
- HOW TO GET THERE** Take the bus from the Ximen (West Gate) station.
- BEST TIME TO VISIT** December-March
- TEMPERATURE** -8°C

1. Kids playing in the snow (by Huang Yanhong)
2. Dragon dance at Dujuan Mountain Villa (by Huang Yanhong)
3. Tourists on a winter tour (by Shi Baoxiu)



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3



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# Insight into the Mosuo Community

DISCOVERIES

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY GAIL KINGSTON







The photographer and Granny Xiao

Previous page: A picture of the clan, Lijiazui Village  
Right: Muzhi Village at Caohai

The Lugu Lake lies where Yanyuan County of Sichuan Province is bounded by Ninglang County of Yunnan Province. Its picture-perfect scenery is made mysterious and enchanting by distinct folklore and habits.

The area around the lake is home to the Mosuo, an ethnic group in which men and women live together without the formality of marriage. However, over the passage of time, new forms of marriage and family structures have emerged, and the number of married couples and patrilineal families is on the increase. When Gai Mingsheng, a noted photographer, arrived he immediately found himself in a world ruled by women where the family takes a variety of forms. He shot one family photograph after another, in an attempt to capture the real images of the Mosuo people and relate their stories. During his 60-day stint, he had scribbled down a host of questions in his notebook: What was the peculiar form of Mosuo marriage like? How is the history and culture carried on orally in the Mosuo community? What is the inside story about the family, the clan and the clan village?

To get the answers to these and other questions he visited more than 60 families and befriended six of the 13 "dabas" in the area. He talked to Living Buddha Yishi and Granny Xiao, both legendary figures among the Mosuo people. He marvelled at the written Mosuo language and made friends with many members of the community.

– The Editor

#### Notes:

**The Mosuo** ♦ The Mosuo people are a branch of the Naxi ethnic group. However, they are rather different from the Naxi people in the Lijiang River Valley.

**Family** ♦ There are three forms of family in the Mosuo community: matrilineal family, the largest having as many as 40 members; patrilineal family, which is more or less in the same form as families of other ethnic groups in China; a family in which members live together along either matrilineal or patrilineal lines.

**Head of a Family** ♦ In a standard matrilineal family, the most senior member plays the role of matriarch.

**Clan** ♦ A Mosuo clan comprises a number of families linked by the same matrilineal line. These families are independent of each other.

**Clan Leader** ♦ The position of clan leader is contended by men who stay with their sisters' families. The clan leader takes care of the clan's religious affairs and exchanges with counterparts. Interestingly, in his own family he obeys the matriarch.

**A'xia (or A'zhu)** ♦ The term a'xia refers to a person's live-in partner of the opposite sex. In the Mosuo community, when a man or woman comes of age, he or she begins living with an a'xia. The relationship may last as briefly as a few days or as long as decades.

**A'xia-Visiting Marriage** ♦ This is an age-old form of marriage, with both partners staying with their mothers. Only when night falls does the man visit his sexual partner. The children born of this relationship belong to the woman.

**Man-Moving-in Marriage** ♦ After a period of nightly cohabitation, a couple may choose to set up a family of their own. The male a'xia moves into his woman's home without going through any wedding formalities. The man retains his family name but the woman becomes the leader of the family.

**Woman-Moving-in Marriage** ♦ When a woman stays with the man's family, their children become members of the patrilineal family. This form of marriage is an important step in the transition of the a'xia-visiting marriage towards monogamy.

**Monogamy** ♦ The number of monogamous families is on the increase in the Mosuo community. This form of marriage is mainly adopted by hereditary headmen of bygone days, village and township leaders, demobilised soldiers, and those who have worked away from home.

**Daba** ♦ The term refers to shamans and scholars. They are the ones who have carried on the history of the Mosuo people from generation to generation.

**Hereditary Headmen** ♦ Prior to the democratic reform of the 1950s, hereditary headmen served as administrative officials of various parts of the area inhabited by the ethnic Mosuo people. In his office a hereditary headman was assisted by a number of executives.

*This article is based on stories, as told by the photographer; the facts have not been checked by him.*









The family of my host Azu Dawazubo at Wujiao Village, Muli County, is a large one with 24 members all living in the same courtyard surrounded by two-storey wood houses, of which the upper floor is for people and the ground floor for domestic animals. In his broken mandarin, Azu told me about his family, the number of oxen and sheep they owned and the age of each family member.

It is beyond normal imagination how these people live in a

primitive harmony. Without anyone in command, everyone knows his or her responsibilities, some look after the herds, some clean the courtyard, some fetch feed for the pigs, others cook, while the elderly pray in front of a shrine. Though they all eat out of the same pot, if one wants more, one can return to one's small family after the "public meal" is over. Achema, Azu's aunt, who is five years younger than he, is the matriarch of the family.





The 85 members of the Ba'er clan in Luoshui Village is made up of 12 families, with Ba'er Dashi, 66, as the clan leader. In Dashi's own family, however, he defers to his younger sister, 65-year-old Lhamo, who is the matriarch. Lhamo's man is Puncog, 78, a destitute slave who at the age of 25 escorted Tarlan, a local lama, to Tibet, and then stayed for a while in India before moving in with Lhamo. A jack of all trades, Puncog is a cobbler, carpenter, and

horse-tamer combined in one. The house behind him was his own creation. Within the Ba'er clan, there exist various marriages, including a'xia-visiting, man moving-in and traditional matriarchal.

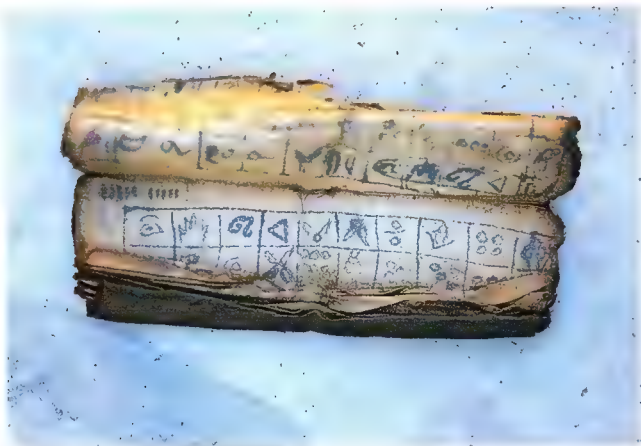
From left to right (front row). Dashi Lhamo's son Dong Zhi; her sister's daughters Cerer and Zhima; Dashi Lhamo and her husband Puncog; her nephew-in-law Erchi; clan leader Ba'er Dashi; her sister's daughters Cezhu and Jiachima.



Sitting in the front row is Ngangoi Zhalshi, a 65-year-old man from Mukua Village who moved in with his wife as a young man, working both as a herdsman and fisherman. After his wife died, Ngangoi became the patriarch of the family, which is surnamed Yang in the Han style. He has three sons and three daughters. Li Longkang, his second daughter's husband, is a Han man who lives with the family.

From left to right: Li Longkang, second son-in-law; Yang Ci'er, eldest grand-daughter; Yang Jiacao, grand-daughter; Yang Zhalshi, grandfather; Yang Er'che, second daughter; Yang Kumo, fourth daughter; Yang Youhuan, grand-daughter.



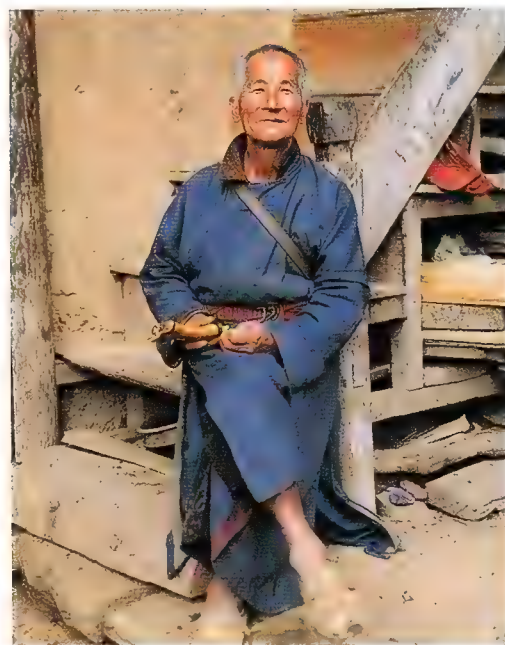


The 27 pictographs in the religious scripture provided by Ngor, the daba of Walapian Village. To ascertain them as the authentic written Mosuo language, I consulted Living Buddha Talan Gaisang Yixie, the only Buddhist scholar in the area. Later, scholars in the study of the Dongba Culture discovered two further copies of such scriptures in Waku Village, and they believed that these pictographs belonged to the earliest written Mosuo language. They gradually fell into disuse because, with their limited number, they could not be used to express complicated meanings.



Ngao, the young daba of Walapian Village, poses in ethnic attire while sitting on the ridge of the Shuagu Mountain. It was he who showed me the ancient written language of the Mosuo people, and related to me a number of local legends and cultural anecdotes. He even recited his clan's genealogical tree up through 30 generations.

Ngazuo, 68, is the only daba in his village. He gave me an insight into the Mosuo people's genealogy and the route by which their ancestors migrated to where they are today. At my request, he, too, recited his clan's genealogical tree up through 27 generations. After repeated comparisons I was surprised to discover that prior to the 19th generation, he had the same ancestors as Ngao of Walapian Village. This shows that it was only after the 19th generation that the clan split in two.



The male a'xia for Lhaze from Gesa Village is Wang Zhalshi, a lama of the Nyingma sect of Lamaism. In this sect lamas are allowed to have sexual relationships with women. Lhaze's family furnishes a rather impressive shrine. Wang (right), who usually stays with his younger sister, goes to Lhaze's house during the day to chant incantations, where he joins his 18-year-old son Jiaze (also a lama) in conducting the religious rituals.







The funeral of Nakachi, a daba of Walabian Village, was a solemn and expensive one. It cost a total of 10,000 yuan to make the sedan, decorate the mourning room and prepare the feast. It is said that if an aged matriarch were to die, the ceremony would be even more magnificent. An armoured rider representing the dead would mount a cleaned white horse and visit each household who, in return, offer gifts.

Lamas played an important role in this funeral. Before the cremation, they all put on colourful robes to pray for the deceased.



Xiao Shuming, a woman of Han background, mastered the Mosuo language a year after she moved in as the third wife of Labaochen, a hereditary headman at the Lugu Lake. She learned to shoot while riding a horse and gradually emerged as a sharp-shooter. In her prime years she went hunting with a revolver in her left hand and a German-made maser in her right, but her favourite weapon was a US-made Roosevelt carbine. She rose to fame when she had shot three wild ducks with a single shot. Strangely enough, she has never adopted a Mosuo name.

In the past, Mosuo people with higher social status all chose to have a formal marriage. It is said that because those who had set up their own families had to pay household tax, many preferred the a'xia-visiting marriage, which became a Mosuo custom and has been passed on until today.



Tianchi Zhoima, 42, is the matriarch of this eight-member family in Mukua Village. Her husband, Lhachug, is 53 years old. All five children have adopted their father's surname which smacks of a patrilineal family. According to local dialect, the character "Lha" means tiger and all those with this surname are endowed with the valour of a tiger.

From left to right: Lhalachug, the fourth son; Lhagake, daughter; Tianchi Zhoima, mother; Lhachug, father; and Lhachi'er, the eldest son.



"Now that you have come, please stay..."

The heart-stirring song lingered in the air as I returned to the wood shack in which I stayed to unpack my luggage. The following day, all the friends who had come for the photo session left. I decided to stay so as to carry out my goal of shooting 100 pictures of Mosuo families. Mukua, the Mosuo-inhabited town where I am now staying, is situated in Yanyuan County, Sichuan Province. Wanggyai, my host, is a warm-hearted young man; volunteering to be my interpreter, he escorted me on my visit to every village. But the photographic excursion proved more difficult than I had imagined, for the local people do not like to have their pictures taken, especially by strangers. All I could do was to bide my time, and befriend them before they were willing to pose for my camera. On some occasions, the photo session with one single family would last an entire day.

When I had left Mukua and arrived at Zhaowoluo Village in Zuosuo Township, the first person I met was Nachug, a loveable, outgoing 18-year-old Mosuo girl who knew quite a lot about the outside world through her many travels. The local people call her "Young Princess", partly because her grandfather used to be the hereditary headman of Zuosuo Township and partly because of her unique mannerism.

All the members of her family were waiting for me. Bima, her grandmother, sat in the middle in her best clothes; at 70, she was the younger sister of the former township hereditary headman as well as the matriarch of the family. The most interesting old person I have ever seen, she loves smoking and when she laughs she would giggle non-stop. "Am I beautiful?" Bima asked, immediately after I finished clicking my camera. Every member of the group laughed.

Nachug's younger brother accompanied me on a trip to the "grassy ocean", a large lake whose surface was covered with water weed. A number of children were grazing buffaloes while rowing tiny boats. "Dad lives in that village," he said, pointing to the Liuwa Isle in the lake. It turned out only two families lived on the island. On entering one of the houses, I was greeted by an amiable old man, who had fathered Nachug and her sisters and brothers through an a'xia relationship with their mother. In his younger years he visited her frequently. Today, in old age and poor health, he chose to stay with his younger sister. Loneliness is the common problem with many old men who live by themselves in this women's world, especially those who have had only a brief a'xia relationship with their female partners.

Night had fallen when I bade goodbye to Nachug's father. As I ambled along the moonlit footpath I imagined the old man still gazing wistfully at our diminishing forms.

I arrived at Lige by boat, and then went to Walapian Village by horse.

The dreary sound of drums and fireworks could be heard in the village where a funeral was being held for a deceased daba. "Only in this way can the soul of the deceased remain in communion with heaven", one of the villagers told me. The daba – the Musuo term for shaman or scholar – is held in high esteem among the villagers.

I put down my camera, bought some cigarettes, liquor and tea, and went to visit the family of Nakachi, the daba who had just died. After kowtowing in the mourning room, I arranged for a bus to bring the lamas and did what I could to help the family. When I turned up the following day Gyaze, the deceased's son, said to me in a friendly way, "You can take whatever pictures you want." Even with the host's consent, I knew I had to act with discretion.

The cremation of the daba's remains took place on the third day. The entire village rose early, and at seven o'clock the procession started moving. Some of the mourners held pine twigs and colourful sutra streamers. Ngao, the other daba in the village, chanted incantations while walking by the colourfully bedecked hearse. I clicked my camera in the procession. Without Gyaze's permission, I would never have gained this once-in-a-lifetime photographic opportunity. Sticks and twigs had already been piled up in an open space in the forest. After the remains of the deceased were placed into the pile, the hearse was dismantled and added. When the fire was



A page from the author's notes copying the Mosuo written language





Collecting seaweed

made, all those present left. Only a dozen lamas in colourful robes remained. I was permitted to stay. Some of the lamas, not wanting to be photographed, overturned my tripod repeatedly. It was only with Gyaze's intervention that I was allowed to finish.

I was told there were only 13 dabas in the entire area inhabited by the Mosuo people. They are the very persons who have kept the Mosuo history and culture alive through the generations. With Nakachi's death, Ngao had become the only village daba and he became my close friend after the funeral. I invited him to drink *sulima*, an indigenous liquor. Over one delicious cup after another, we talked on and on until both of us became drunk.

"What a pity the Mosuo people have no written language – You have to carry on your culture on lips," I muttered in drunkenness, not knowing what I was talking about.

"Wait a minute," my host cried, "I'll let you have a look at the written Mosuo language." He rose and soon returned with a book in hand. It was a religious scripture he had kept to himself. He told me that this was one of the only three scriptures extant in the entire Mosuo-inhabited area. The scripture was so worn it threatened to fall apart at the slightest pull. In excitement I raised my camera, but I had only clicked one snapshot when he stopped me by covering the book with his hand. At my tenacious pleading, he allowed me to copy down the 27 letters of the written Mosuo alphabet.

The Yongning Hot Spring is situated at the foot of the Zhanmeizi Mountain, less than half a kilometre from Walapian Village. During my fortnight-stay in the village I went there almost every day so that I could talk to the local people and soak myself in the hot water to alleviate the strain of my lumbar muscles. Before long I hit it off so well with the staff that they refused to take my payment. "As a member of our village you are free to use the facilities here," one of them said.

To repay their hospitality, I did what chores I could for them. My training in fine art came in handy when one family was having trouble finding a painter for their newly built house. To their great delight, I painted the pillars and walls with swirling dragons, flying phoenix, dancing deer, cranes, and whatnot. "Just feel free to shoot what pictures you want," the host told me. Sincerity, it dawned on me, is a two-way street.

In Luoshui Village I saw a tree more than a thousand years old. The villagers told me that the tree was as old as the day that the Mosuo people had settled down in this place. I wanted an elderly person to sit on the protruding roots so that I could take a nice picture of the tree. During the two hours I was standing there, none of the old men or women agreed to do so. At my wit's end my thoughts turned to my hostess. At 78, Nazhub Zhoima was the matron of a large family with four generations living under the same roof, who



was also the owner of a small inn. When I invited her to pose for me, she asked, "Why should you ask me to sit here and have my picture taken?" I answered, "This tree should be known to more people as the eyewitness to the history of the Mosuo people. Besides, when you sit here and have your picture taken you will live as long as the tree itself." The elderly woman laughed, and taking the opportunity I clicked my camera a dozen times.

**June 28** I rushed to Duoshe Town on the eastern shore of the lake. What attracted me there was a legendary woman by the name of Xiao Shuming. "I was born in Chengdu," she told me. "My father was the quartermaster of the 24th Army of the Kuomintang. When I was 17, with Army Commander Liu Wenhui serving as the matchmaker, my parents married me to Lashichen, the hereditary headman of Suoshu Township. That was how I became the wife of a hereditary headman." The old woman was rather talkative. "When I first arrived at the Lugu Lake, I had a hard time adjusting myself to the language and the customs. And I was very homesick. At the time I lived on the Liuwa Isle. Whenever I felt bored, I would play the accordion I had brought with me from Ya'an and sang the song *My Home Is on the Songhua River*. The Mosuo women rowing in the lake often paused to listen to me." I made an appointment with her, but the following day, when I came to see her, she had already been taken on a tour of Chengdu.

**July 2** I wanted to shoot pictures of Lijiazui, the most primitive of all Mosuo villages. The road leading there being too bumpy for automobiles, I mounted a horse and set off from Walapian Village. After climbing over 12 mountain ridges, I embarked on a horse trail several hundred metres in length. The trail was wide enough only for one horse. Nyije, my guide, cracked his whip, so that if there was a horse caravan ahead, it would stop to make way for us. As I rode close behind Nyije, my body was constantly scraped by the protruding cliff wall and brambles. But gadflies were even more of a scourge. The horse is easily startled once its neck is stung by it, and the consequence can be disastrous. All the way I watched the horse's neck closely.



Liji Penisular

Soon we exited the horse trail and entered an expanse of virgin forest. Hardly had I raised my camera when the gadflies launched their attack. The horse reared, throwing me to the ground and bolted.

In the afternoon I arrived at Lijiazui Village, whose sequestered repose was evocative of a fairyland. I found the village head and told him the purpose of my visit. "You came this far just to shoot a group picture of the villagers?" he asked in surprise.

**July 3** Early in the next morning the village head began summoning all the villagers to a slope, where I rigged up my equipment. Two hours passed, but only a dozen or so people turned up. Not wanting to take my failure lying down, I asked the village head to send for the most respected elderly villagers with the promise that they would be treated with 30 bottles of liquor and several packages of candy and cigarettes I had hastily packed. The elderly arrived, and began drinking while summoning their fellow villagers. But it was not until four o'clock in the afternoon that most of the villagers had been assembled. I made haste and shot the pictures. Interestingly enough, after the photo session, the villagers were not in a hurry to leave. They remained on the grassland drinking and eating candy until it was very late. According to the village head, no festival in the village had aroused such activity. I was happy to be the inadvertent maker of this event.

**July 12** I rented a tiny boat and resumed my journey at Luoshui Village.

The wind whipped up waves which filled the boat and soon soaked me through. To save my life, I kept ladling the water out of the boat. Five hours later I disembarked and reached Wuzhiluo, where I dried my wet clothes by a fire while chatting with some local people. A number of fishermen appeared on the scene and asked me for a smoke. They told me that Xiao Shuming had just returned from Chengdu.

I rented two horses and hurried over to Dushe Town. Xiao was very apologetic when she greeted me. "Come tomorrow, and you may shoot whatever pictures you want," she assured me.

The next morning I rose early lest the old woman be spirited away once again. "In my 53 years of living here, it was the first time I had ever visited Chengdu," she said, explaining that she was the guest of a news medium based in the capital of Sichuan.

Her son brought her horse, which she mounted in such a nimble fashion that it was hard to believe she was already in her seventies.

**July 13** In the morning I set off from Ninglang to Kunming. In these couple of months I have developed an attachment to this land, and I found it rather difficult to tear myself away from it. I promised the local friends that I would join them again on the Mountain Festival.

Edited by Huang Yanhong  
Translated by Ling Yuan

Right: Nazhub posing at the foot of the ancient tree for the author







## GAI MINGSHENG, A PROFILE



Gai taking a picture of a family in Wujiao Village

Gai Mingsheng, 48, is a veteran photographer from Dalian. Two years ago, he was seriously injured in an accident. After a year of being bed-ridden, his first thought was to put his career together as a photographer. He left the hospital wearing waist and neck braces and pushing a tiny cart loaded with photographic equipment. In May this year, he participated in a photo expedition to the Lugu Lake. Five days later, the 30 or so other photographers left with a satisfactory smile and piles of film. Gai Mingsheng, however, moved by the song sung by the Mosuo girls at the farewell party, "Now that you have come, please stay...." stayed behind. To accomplish the goal of shooting pictures of 100 Mosuo families, he visited one village after another, without so much as a brief respite. But the task proved no mean feat. The first step was to befriend the local people by wining them or being wined. To drink too little would be seen as a sign of insincerity; to drink too much would make him feel so dizzy as to have difficulty operating his camera. In the process he also encountered a number of risky situations. The tiny boat he was riding in all but capsized on the lake in a sudden storm; his mount was startled and threw him to the ground; in one emergency application of the brakes, he was thrown air-borne from his motorcycle seat to land only a few feet away from where a bus screeched to an abrupt stop. Behind the 60 or so family photos he had taken were many intriguing stories. But by the time he left the Lugu Lake, he found himself could not smile as winsomely as his fellow photographers had when they left after staying only five days – he hadn't attained his goal of taking 100 family pictures. He will soon be hospitalised for a risky operation on his neck. Before that happens, he said, he wants to visit the Mosuo community one more time.



Lugu Lake viewed from the top of Mt. Chi'aobi

## TRAVEL TIPS

Lugu Lake can be reached from either Chengdu or Kunming.

### Travel Routes (for reference)

Chengdu — Xichang — Yanyuan — Lugu Lake
Chengdu — Panzhihua — Ninglang — Lugu Lake
Kunming — Dali — Lijiang — Lugu Lake

### Chengdu – Lugu Lake Transportation

Route	Departures	Rate
Air Chengdu – Xichang	twice daily	220 yuan (domestic rate)
Train Chengdu – Xichang	three times daily	hard berth, 91 yuan, hard seat, 45 yuan
Bus Xichang – Yanyuan	9 departures daily	41 yuan for bus (return) 50 yuan for mini-bus (return)
Bus Yanyuan – Lugu Lake	daily	15 yuan for bus (single) 20 yuan for mini-bus (single)







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我們熱忱地歡迎海內外客戶前來建立貿易聯繫，攜手合作，共創美好前程。



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中华



C I T Y   P R O F I L E

# BEIJING

## THE HEART OF ONE BILLION

Article by Gloria Shang   Photos by Wang Wenbo

Few foreigners would tour China without visiting Beijing. The attraction to the grand capital is irresistible: The Great Wall that for thousands of years has been the symbol of ancient China and its civilisation; the Forbidden City which conveys so much mystery; and many other cultural relics that have made Beijing into a museum of Chinese history.

However, these days, people visiting Beijing will not just see its past glory – what awaits them is a modern, international metropolis. Skyscrapers have changed the ancient capital's skyline. Glamorous golden palace roofs are mirrored on the glass-fronted walls of towering buildings. In transition, the city is a blend of ancient and modern, East and West.

Beijing is the heart of China. Among its citizens are representatives from almost all of China's 56 ethnic groups, be they descendants of former royal families, veteran Long Marchers, governmental officials, scientists, artists, workers, farmers or owners of private businesses. In Beijing, one can feel the heartbeat of the 1.2 billion Chinese, accounting for one-fifth of the world's population, who are opening up to prepare themselves for the 21st Century.







1. Zhengyang Gate stands magnificently at the south of Tian'anmen Square.
2. The newly constructed West Railway Station, the terminus of the Beijing-Kowloon Railway, is the largest railway station in Asia. (by Yuan Xuejun)
3. A satellite receiving station in the northern suburb of Beijing
4. Beijing's Second Ring Way East (Wei Biao Hu)
5. Qinghua, one of China's most prestigious universities, is known as "Cradle of Engineers". (by Shao Hua)

Previous pages:  
Tian'anmen, or Heavenly Peace Gate, the front gate of the Beijing Palace Museum (by Wang Miao)

## A Grand Capital in the East

Visiting Beijing, you surprisingly find yourself immersed in oriental culture both old and new. Here, you see traces of China's long history as well as the signs of transition leading the country into a new era.

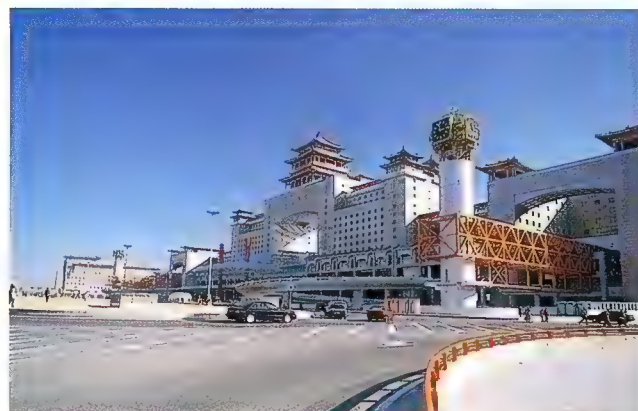
Situated at the northern tip of the North China Plain, Beijing is a municipality under the direct administration of the central government, covering an area of 16,800 square kilometres. To its north lie the Yanshan Mountains and to its east is Tianjin, a coastal city by the Bohai Sea. Under its jurisdiction are four urban districts – Dongcheng, Xicheng, Chongwen and Xuanwu, four suburban districts – Chaoyang, Haidian, Fengtai and Shijingshan, and 10 outlying districts and counties.

Beijing is China's second largest city (the first being Shanghai) with a population exceeding 10 million (according to the 1990 census), of whom around 7 million are city dwellers, the rest are farmers living in the outlying suburbs. In addition, the city also hosts millions of temporary residents who are businesspeople, tourists, or passengers in transit. Many Chinese from other provinces have come to Beijing to find a job or set up their own small businesses, for example, most of the city's tailors and vegetable peddlers are from Jiangsu and Zhejiang, most construction workers are from Hebei, and most domestic helpers are from Anhui and Henan provinces.

### A City of 3,000 Years Old

Without exception, visitors to Beijing are amazed by the city's by-gone glory symbolised by its magnificent imperial palace and numerous ancient buildings scattered throughout the city. But few can imagine that the grand capital has a history far beyond what has been demonstrated by its existing architecture.

In Zhoukoudian, a suburb of Beijing, the Peking Man lived some 700,000 years ago. Archaeologists have also proved that a clan society



existed here some 18,000 years ago.

Historical records show that it developed as a frontier trading town for the Mongols, Koreans and the tribes from Shandong and central China. Beijing became the feoff of the State of Yan during the early Western Zhou Dynasty (c. 11th Century-770 B.C.). The town underwent a number of changes as it was acquired by new conquerors eager to own



the strategic position that the town held on the edge of the North China Plain. It eventually evolved from a stronghold into an imperial capital after Kublai Khan, founder of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) set up his imperial court in Beijing.

In later years, it remained as the capital of the Yuan (1271-1368), Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, each emperor having added his own construction to increase its grandeur. The Forbidden City, so called because it was off limits for 500 years, is the largest and best preserved cluster of ancient buildings in China. It was home to emperors of two dynasties (24 in all), the Ming and Qing, who never stray from this pleasure-dome unless they absolutely had to.

In 1911, the democratic revolution led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen toppled the Qing Court and Beijing (then called Beiping) became the capital of the Republic of China. But when Chiang Kai-shek took power, he moved his government to Nanjing.

On October 1, 1949, on the rostrum at the top of Tian'anmen (Heavenly Peace Gate) the leader of China's New Democratic Revolution, Mao Zedong, declared the founding of the People's Republic of China. Since then, Beijing has been the heart of the New China.

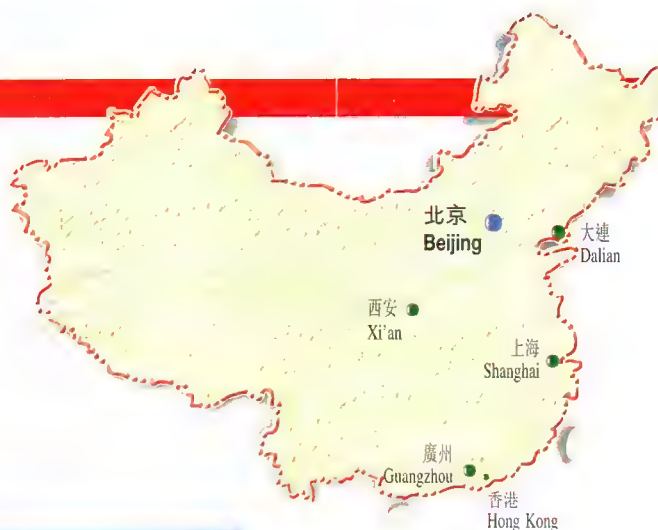
### Modern International Metropolis

Beijing is the centre of national politics, economy, and culture. As well as having a unique ancient charm, the capital of 1.2 billion Chinese also has a new look in many ways.

As a vanguard of China's drive towards modernisation, featuring reform and opening up to the outside world, Beijing has experienced some of the most dramatic changes over the past two decades. The city's urban landscape has changed. In places once occupied by one-storied houses, sky-scrapers, hotels, office buildings, department stores and residential buildings have risen.

Over the last five years China has invested a total of 45 billion yuan to improve its road, rail and air infrastructures. It has seen the construction of a dozen or so flyovers, extended highways and two new ring ways.

The expanded international airport and additional routes have made air travel even more convenient between Beijing and other major domestic and overseas cities. The 2,536-kilometre Beijing-Kowloon Railway completed in 1995 will help to make 200 million people in nine provinces



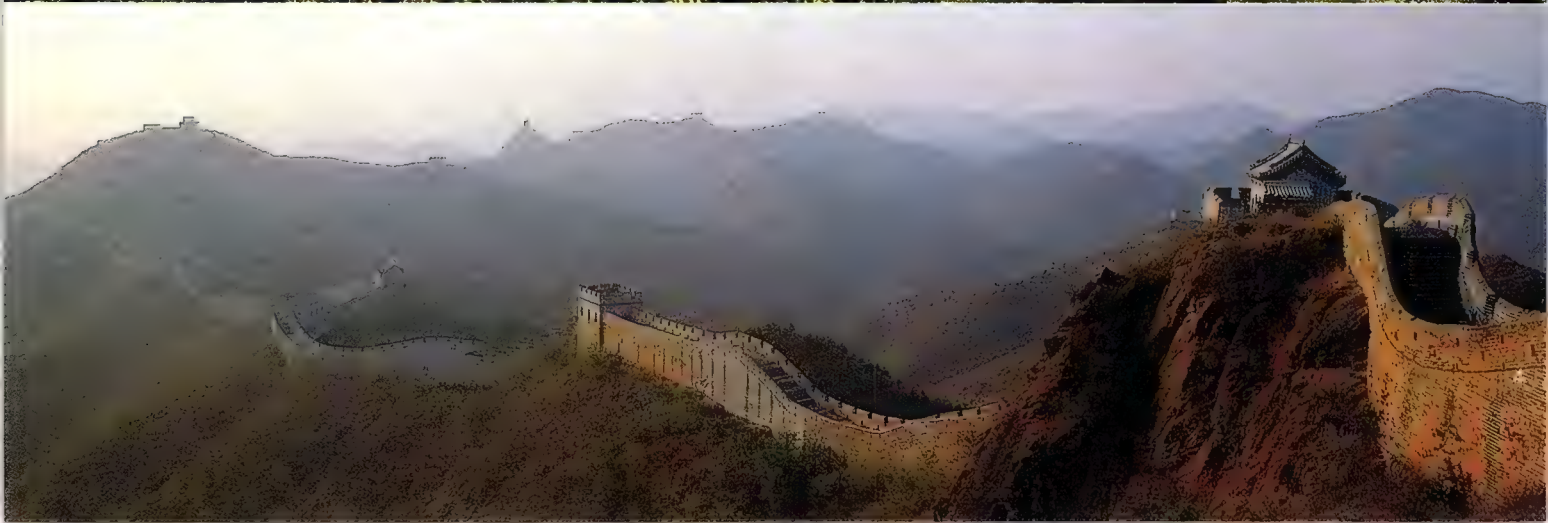
better off. Its north terminus, the newly constructed Beijing West Station, is the largest and most modern project in China's railway construction history. At 300,000 square metres, it is 7.5 times larger than the Beijing Railway Station and is able to serve 20,000 passengers. When all supplemental facilities are completed, its operational capacity will rise from 120 trains per day to 180. By 1997, once passenger-trains begin to operate along its whole length, people will be able to reach the Chinese capital by express train from Hong Kong.

As Beijing opens its door wider and works on improving its investment environment, more and more overseas investors are finding Beijing a good place to do business. The city now has more than



10,000 overseas funded enterprises, with 1,552 new comers in 1995. Over the past five years, the actual use of foreign funds has reached US\$5.8 billion. Beijing's Economic and Technological Development Zone alone absorbed 800 million yuan of foreign investment. In an area of 15 square kilometres along the Beijing-Tianjin Highway, 96 companies have set up their establishments, of which 66 are foreign-funded, including







world conglomerates such as ABB of Switzerland and Bell of Germany. The 80-square-kilometre zone is planned to develop into a new town with 400,000 residents.

In 1995, Beijing received 62 million tourists, generating an income of 40 billion yuan, including US\$2 billion in foreign currency. The city now has 190 tourist hotels, of which 76 are three-star or higher. Meanwhile, international exchanges are increasing. Beijing has established 22 sister-city relationships with cities in various countries across the world, including Ankara, Bangkok, Belgrade, Berlin, Buenos Aires, Cairo, Jakarta, Lima, Madrid, New York, Paris, Washington D.C. and so on.

The municipal government reported a GDP of 138.5 billion yuan and a revenue of 11.5 billion yuan in 1995, with electronics, light industries, steel and iron, import and export and tourism as its pillar industries.

Beijing's major exports, including garments, knitwear, carpet, handicrafts, coal, rolled steel, TV sets and radio cassette recorders sell well in 130 countries and regions. In 1995, the import and export volume reached US\$4.23 billion.

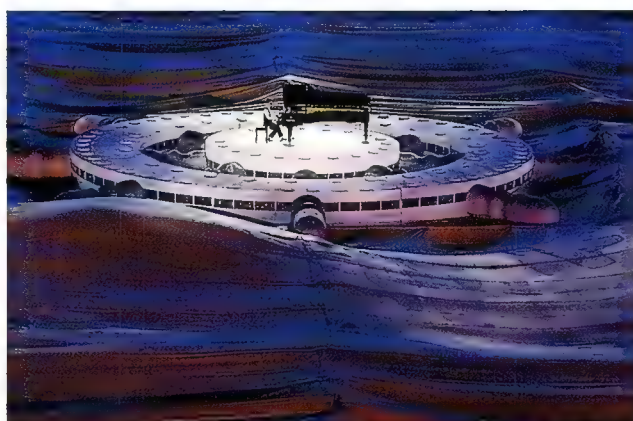
As in other big cities, housing is always a key concern of its residents. As a result of the painstaking efforts of the municipal government, the housing situation in Beijing has improved remarkably in recent years. More than 8.57 million square metres of residential accommodation were finished in 1995, raising its urban average living space to 13.2 square metres per person.

### A Cultural City

Equally, Beijing is a cultural city. Gathered here are the nation's top research institutions in the fields of social sciences, science and technology, many leading the world in their specific field. A great number of China's talented artists also congregate in Beijing: The China Peking Opera Troupe, the Central Opera and Dance Drama Academy, the People's Art Theatre and the Central Philharmonic Orchestra, for example, are among the nation's top performers. Its numerous theatres and galleries



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provide a stage for both Chinese and overseas talent.

The capital registers 710 middle schools and 2,876 primary schools. Among its 65 colleges and universities, the Qinghua University, Beijing University and Peking Union Medical School are world-famous. In its north-west suburb, Zhongguancun, where Beijing University and the China Academy of Sciences are located, a high-tech business area has emerged. As most of the enterprises focus on computer and other electronic products, the area is nicknamed Beijing's Silicon Valley.

At the same time, protection of the environment has been emphasized. The city's forest coverage rate increased from 28.2 per cent in 1990 to 32.4 per cent in 1995. So, today's

Beijingers, be they descendants from the by-gone royal families, or later comers from various provinces and regions, or overseas business people and visitors, are living in a greener and cleaner Beijing.

Note: All data is based on the report given by Mayor Li Qiyang to the 10th People's Congress of Beijing on March 29, 1996.

1. Tian'anmen Square decorated for holiday celebrations
2. Ruins of Yuanmingyuan Garden
3. A panoramic view of one of Beijing's urban districts
4. The Great Wall at Jinshanling
5. The Stadium of the Olympic Sports Centre, Beijing
6. Melody of the Yellow River, a piano concert (by Yuan Xuejun)
7. IPC, one of the high-tech companies in Zhongguancun, an area nicknamed "Beijing's Silicon Valley"





1. On the night of the Mid-Autumn Festival, an ancient atmosphere prevails upon Suzhou Lane in the Summer Palace. (by Han Zishan)
2. In the Qianxin Hall of Temple of Heaven emperors held ceremonies and prayed for good harvests. (by Ma Yiu Chun)
3. Yangxin Hall in the Beijing Palace Museum (by Yuan Xuejun)

## Touring Beijing : the Highlights

Extraordinarily rich in historical relics and scenic spots, Beijing is a metropolis of grand proportions. Tourists are sometimes overwhelmed by its vastness and there are almost too many things to see. But there are some highlights which no tourist should miss.

### View from Coal Hill Over the Ancient City

Outside the confines of the Forbidden City is Jingshan Park, or Coal Hill, a mound created by the excavated earth from the palace moat. From the top you get a magnificent panorama of the capital and a view over a massive expanse of shimmering golden rooftops. This bird's-eye view gives you a sense of the powerful authority of the by-gone monarchy and a clear idea of the layout of the old city centred by the Forbidden City.

The ancient city spreads out on a 7.5-kilometre central axis, which begins at Zhengyang Gate in the south, crosses Tian'anmen Square to enter the imperial palace via the Heavenly Peace Gate.

### Learn About Life Within the Forbidden City

Built during the reign of the Ming Emperor Yongle in the early 15th Century, the construction took 10,000 craftsmen, one million labourers and 14 years. With a total of 9,999 rooms, the palace occupies an area of 720,000 square metres. Outside the 10-metre-high red city wall is a 52-metre circular moat. It is thus called "a city within the city". The palace is divided into two parts: the outer palace, composed of three major halls, the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the Hall of Internal Harmony and the Hall of Preserved Harmony, is reserved for imperial ceremonies. The inner palace was where the emperor handled state affairs and lived with his queen and concubines. In the extreme north-eastern section, in the resi-

dence of the Qing Emperor Qianlong, the Palace Museum's art collections are displayed, including traditional Chinese paintings, jewellery, and precious gifts presented by foreign envoys, many of them being rare pieces.

### Feel the Heartbeat of China in Tian'anmen Square

Lying outside the front gate of the Forbidden City, Tian'anmen Square is the centre of Beijing. To its south erects the Monument to the People's Heroes; beyond the monument is the Memorial Hall of Mao Zedong; on the west edge is the Great Hall of the People which houses the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress; facing this, to the east, is the Museum of Chinese History. On the vast desert of paving, the welcoming ceremonies for visiting state guests are held as well as the daily ceremonies for raising and lowering the national flag. But for most of the time, you see people taking pictures, flying kites or lining up to pay their respects to the late Chinese leader Mao.

### Roam Through the Hutongs and Get to Know the People

*Hutong* is the general name given to the ancient Beijing-style lanes formed during the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. Thousands of them surround the Forbidden City. *Hutongs* were positioned according to the social status of the residents. *Hutongs* laid to the east and west of the imperial palace, were for either high court officials or relatives of the royal family. Other lanes, occupied by business people and common citizens, were situated in the north or the south far from the city centre.

Even today, half the city's 7 million population is housed in this Beijing-style residence composed of four single-storey houses forming a courtyard at its centre. "Visiting a *Hutong*" has become a hot tourist attraction these days. Riding a tricycle, you may explore the various ancient



lanes and stop to visit a family living in one of the quadrangles. It is possible to even dine with the residents. Visiting a *hutong* household you will almost certainly be treated as a VIP because in addition to their hospitality the Beijingers also care about their rituals and traditions.

This is a good chance to get acquainted with the Beijingers. In many ways, you will find these city residents different from Chinese in other parts of the country. Although the majority are Hans, it is possible to find people from almost every other ethnic group in Beijing, with the Huis and the Manchus forming the larger communities. Beijingers are hospitable and warm hearted. If you ask for directions on the street you will get enthusiastic help, and some young people may even try to start up a conversation with you to practise their English or another foreign language.

### Visit the World's Largest Royal Garden, the Summer Palace

First built in 1750 by Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty, the garden was used by the residents of the Forbidden City as a summer resort to escape the ferocious heat of the city and is a good example of an ancient Chinese royal garden. The Summer Place occupies a total area of 290 hectares, of which three-fourths is covered by the Kunming Lake. Main buildings include Paiyun (Cloud-Dispelling) Hall, and the Long Corridor. It houses a collection of 40,000 precious relics. Situated approximately 20 kilometres north-west from the city centre, it can be easily reached by bus No. 332 starting from the Zoo, or by minibus or taxi.

### Climb the Great Wall to Make Yourself a Real Man

Classified as "a world cultural heritage" by the United Nations, the

Great Wall should definitely be on your itinerary. There are two sections of the Great Wall open to tourists in the Beijing area. One is at Badaling, the other at Mutianyu, both in the north-east, 75 and 70 kilometres from the city respectively.

Building began as early as the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.) by the states of Yan and Qin who wanted to guard against invasions by marauding nomadic tribes from the north. It stretches for 5,000 kilometres starting from Shanhai Pass on the east coast, ending in Jiayu Pass in the Gobi Desert in the west. It crosses Beijing, five provinces and two autonomous regions. Most of the sections existing today were built during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

Once on top of the Great Wall, you will be presented with the spectacular sight of the wall snaking up and down the lush, green landscape. Mao Zedong, China's late leader and also a talented poet, once wrote, "One cannot claim himself a real man, until he mounts the Great Wall." In fact, climbing the Great Wall is not necessarily that difficult – at the Mutianyu section, you can reach the top by cable car! Tourist buses are available from your hotels. The Ming Tombs are on route to Badaling; around Mutianyu, you will be able to visit Huairou, Hongluo Monastery and Yanxi Lake.

### Watch Peking Opera or Visit a Teahouse

Peking Opera is considered a symbol of Beijing's traditional performing arts. With a history of 200 years, it has traditionally been the opera of the masses. It is a combination of singing, dialogue, acrobatics and pantomime accompanied by a few string and percussion instruments. Themes are mostly based on historical episodes and classical novels.

Many of the male roles are played by actors whose faces are elaborately and dramatically painted according to their character, while female characters are dressed in beautiful costumes. Liyuan Theatre at Qianmen Hotel caters especially to tourists. At the Laoshe Teahouse in the same area, it is possible to enjoy a cup of Chinese tea in an atmosphere typical of Beijing, tasting a variety of local snacks and watching performances of *Quju*, *Dagu*, and *Pingshu*.

### Taste the Most Famous Dishes

Beijing is for gourmets, you can taste the best regional, Western and Eastern cooking. The following are the most famous in Beijing.







1. Stilt dance performed by suburban farmers at a Spring Festival Fair  
2. Beijing roast Duck is a local speciality that no tourist to Beijing would like to miss.  
3. Peking Opera is China's representative performing art.

**Beijing Roast Duck** The history of this speciality can be traced back to the Song Dynasty (960-1279); by the Ming Dynasty, roast duck became a delicacy for the royal family. The ducks originate from one of the Beijing suburbs where they are fed grain and soybean paste to fatten them up. The dead duck is lacquered with molasses, pumped with air, filled with boiling water, dried and then roasted over a fruit wood fire. The result is a duck with crisp skin and tender meat. The duck is served as different courses. First come the boneless meat and crispy skin in which you dip in plum sauce and wrap in thin flour crepes together with spring onions. The bones are made into a soup. The Beijing Roast Duck Restaurant at Hepingmen (Peace Gate) specialises in traditional Beijing roast duck.

**Imperial Court Dishes** While visiting the Forbidden City, you may wonder what past royal families ate and be curious enough to want to try some. Now, in Beihai Park at the Fangshan Restaurant, you can be served a wide variety of dishes from the Qing Court. Opened in 1925 by chefs who used to work in the Qing royal kitchen, Fangshan Restaurant painstakingly preserves the royal recipes, paying great attention to the colour, aroma, taste, appearance and even the names of its imperial dishes. It serves as many as 300 dishes including "Sweet and Salty Prawn in the Shape of Arhat", "Stuffed Mandarin Fish", "Frog-Shaped Abalone" and so on. Its snacks, which also used to be prepared for the royal families, include a wide variety of delicacies such as sesame bun with meat filling, mashed pea cake, kidney bean flour rolls, steamed corn flour cakes and many others, all exquisitely made.

Over dinner, you can also enjoy the beautiful Beihai Park, with its elegant pagoda and ancient pavilions reflected in the mirror-like water.

**Mongolian Mutton Hot Pot** Originating in the northern areas inhab-

ited by nomads, this dish was introduced to Beijing in the mid-17th Century and has since become a popular seasonal dish in Beijing during autumn and winter. The best is served at Donglaishun Restaurant. A brass pot with charcoal inside is placed at the centre of the table and you cook the mutton strips in the boiling soup consisting of mushrooms and dried shrimps. You season it yourself with a sauce-mix of sesame oil, bean-curd paste, sesame paste and chilli oil.

### Other Scenic Spots and Cultural Relics

**Tiantan Park (Temple of Heaven)** The perfection of Ming architecture, this temple has come to symbolise Beijing, being reproduced on everything from bank notes, to Tiger Balm, to plumbing equipment. The temple was built in 1420 during the reign of Emperor Yongle of the Ming Dynasty and as its name suggests, was used by the emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties to hold prayers and sacrificial ceremonies in worship of Heaven and to pray for good harvest.

The main structure is the Hall of Praying for Good Harvest. A magnificent piece mounted on a three-tiered marble terrace. Four wooden pillars support the roof using a combination of wooden bars, laths and brackets, without the aid of nails or cement. For a structure 38 metres high and 30 metres in diameter it is a stunning accomplishment of carpentry. Other attractions in the park are the Echo Wall, a 65-metre diameter wall where a whisper can travel its whole length, and the Triple Sound Stones. Located in the southern part of the city, Tiantan Park can be reached by taking bus Nos. 6 (to north gate) and 15 (to south gate).

**Ditan Park (Altar of the Earth)** First built in 1530, it was the venue where emperors offered ritual sacrifices to the Earth. Its design reflects the Chinese belief that the earth, in the north, is square and yellow, while



the heaven, in the south, is round and blue. Its ancient buildings include Fangzetan (Worship Platform), Imperial Test Rooms, Palace for Fasting and Sacrifice Pavilion. It is the site of Beijing's annual Spring Festival Fair. Located in the northern part of Beijing, on the Second Ring Way, it can be visited on route to Yonghegong. Travel by the subway's Circle Line or bus Nos. 44 and get off at Andingmen.

**Yonghegong (Lamasery of Harmony and Peace) Temple** Built in 1694, it was the former residence of Emperor Yongzheng of the Qing Dynasty before he ascended the throne. The temple is the most renowned Tibetan Buddhist temple within China outside the Tibet Autonomous Region.



Each of its halls houses numerous lifelike Buddhist figures, including the 18-metre-high Buddha sculptured from a single piece of sandalwood. Open daily between 9:00-16:00 (closed on Monday). Located on the north-east section of the Second Ring Way, it can be easily reached by the subway's Circle Line or bus Nos. 13, 44.

**White Pagoda Monastery** Built in the days of Kublai Khan, founder of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), it was designed by a Nepalese architect and resembles ancient Indian stupas. It still serves as a venue for Buddhist activities. Within the city proper, it is located between Xisi and Fuchengmen, where trolley bus Nos. 3, 2 and bus No. 101 go through.

**Ancient Observatory** Built by the Ming court, it had relatively advanced instruments even at that time. The governments of various dynasties paid great attention to astronomical observations because ancient Chinese belief holds that human activities are influenced by the heaven and that Heaven and man should be in harmony and co-ordination. Located at Jianguomen on the Second Ring Way, it can be reached by subway's Circle Line or bus Nos. 1, 4, 44 and many others.

**Liulichang Cultural Street** It is a market place where Qing-style shops sell books, paintings, calligraphic works, antiquities, folk handicrafts, toys and snacks of local flavours. It is also the site for the annual traditional Spring Festival Fair. It can be reached by the subway's Circle Line, get off at Hepingmen, or take bus Nos. 15 and 44.

**Lugou Bridge, or Marco Polo Bridge** Built in 1192 in the Jin Dynasty, Lugou Bridge is the oldest stone bridge existing in the Beijing area. Located 15 kilometres south-west of Beijing on the Yongding River, it represents ancient bridge architecture in China. With 11 arches, the 266-metre-long and 7.5-metre-wide bridge is built of white marble. Its balustrades are composed of 140 carved pillars on each side. On top of each pillar is a stone lion holding one or more cubs, counting 485 all together. The bridge became widely known in the West after Marco Polo remarked "there is not a bridge in the world to compare with it." Although a public bus runs through the area, it is more convenient for tourists to travel by taxi.

**Dazhong (Big Bell) Temple** Originally called Juesheng Temple, it is more popularly known as Big Bell temple because of the enormous 46-tonne bell inscribed with Buddhist sutras cast during the Yongle reign of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). It used to be a place where emperors came to pray for rain, Buddhists held religious ceremonies and common people had their folk fairs. Today, the temple is an Ancient Bells Museum,



where 600 bells of all kinds are displayed. The largest, called "King of Bells" is a rare cultural relic and national treasure. On New Year's Eve a party is held there. The museum opens daily 8:30-16:30 (closed on Monday). It is situated at the western section of the Third Ring Way North, in Haidian District. Save time by stopping off here on your way to the Summer Palace or the Great Wall.

**Zhoukoudian, the Site of Peking Man** Traces of the Peking Man who lived in the area some 690,000 years ago were first found in a village called Zhoukoudian in the south-west of Beijing in the 1920s. A museum has been built at the site to commemorate the discovery and protect the relics. On a floor space of 1,000 square metres, ancient human fossils, stone implements and other articles are displayed. The museum opens daily from 8:30-16:30. As the location is 50 kilometres away from the city proper, it is better to join an organised tourist group, or hire a taxi or mini-bus.





## For Your Reference

### Transportation:

**Air** Beijing can be reached from anywhere in the world or from any city in China. Air China has four flights daily from Hong Kong to Beijing.

**From the Airport** The International Airport lies 26 kilometres away from the city proper. The newly built Airport Highway makes the journey to and from the airport very smooth. An airport bus goes directly into town or taxis can be hired directly from the airport.

**Taxi** Beijing has 60,000 taxis, divided in three grades according to the type. They usually have a sticker on the window indicating their per-km charge. The highest fare is 2 yuan per kilometre with a flagfall of 12 yuan to cover the first 4 km. The second grade charges 1.6 yuan per kilometre with a flagfall of 10.40 yuan for 4 km. Cars in this grade are smaller, most of them *xiali* without luggage space. The cheapest are yellow mini-vans which cost 1 yuan per kilometre with a flagfall of 10 yuan for 10 km. But this kind of taxi is not available at the airport nor major hotels.

**Bus and Trolley Bus** Beijing has a complete but crowded public transportation network operating between 5:30-23:00 (except for the night lines). All the scenic spots in town and in nearby suburbs can be reached by bus or trolley bus. Bus fares start from 50 cents and increase according to distance for journeys into the suburbs. As a guide to the confusing array of buses, one or two-digit buses are city core, 100-series are trolleys and 300-, 400- and 900-series are suburban lines.

**Subway** Known as the Underground Dragon there are two subway lines. One is the Circle Line, which runs around the city proper, going through the Beijing Railway Station, Qianmen (south end of Tian'anmen Square), Fuxingmen, Xizhimen and Yonghegong (a Tibetan Buddhist Monastery). The other, called Line 1, goes between Xidan (a shopping area) and Pingguoyuan. Fuxingmen station is the intersection for the two lines. The fare is a flat two yuan regardless of distance.

**Tricycle Pedi-Cab** Pedi-cabs have re-emerged in recent years to cater to tourists. Hired from scenic spots such as Tian'anmen Square and Qianmen, step back in time by touring the ancient lanes of *hutongs*. Negotiate the price with the driver before you start.

### Accommodation:

Beijing has 190 hotels open to overseas tourists, of which 76 are three-star or higher. We recommend a few for your convenience:

**Jing Guang New World Hotel \*\*\*\*** ☎ Hujialou, Chaoyang District, Beijing, 100020 (22 km from airport, 6 km from city centre) ☎ (8610) 6501 8888 ☎ (8610) 6501 3333 **Hotel New Otani Chang Fu Gong \*\*\*\*\*** ☎ 26 Jianguomen Wai Street, Beijing, 100022 (27 km from airport, 2 km from city centre) ☎ (8610) 6512 5555 ☎ (8610) 6513 9810 **The Palace Hotel \*\*\*\*\*** ☎ 8 Goldfish Lane, Wangfujing Street, Beijing, 100006 (27 km from airport, close to city centre) ☎ (8610) 6512 8899 ☎ (8610) 6512 9050 **Hotel Kunlun \*\*\*\*\*** ☎ 2 Xinyuan Road South, Chaoyang District, Beijing, 105004 (19 km from airport, 10 km from city centre) ☎ (8610) 6500 3388 ☎ (8610) 6500 3228 **The Great Wall Sheraton Hotel \*\*\*\*\*** ☎ 10 Sanhuan Road East, Chaoyang District, Beijing, 100026 (22 km from airport, 8 km from city centre) ☎ (8610) 6500 5566 ☎ (8610) 6500 1998 **Shangri-La Hotel, Beijing \*\*\*\*\*** ☎ 29 Zizhuyuan Road, Haidian District, Beijing, 100081 (35 km from airport, 10 km from city centre) ☎ (8610) 6841 2211 ☎ (8610) 6841 8006 **Holiday Inn Lido Beijing \*\*\*\*\*** ☎ Jichang Road, Jiangtai Road, Beijing, 100004 (17 km from airport, 15 km from city centre) ☎ (8610) 6437 6688 ☎ (8610) 6437 6540 **Zhaolong Hotel \*\*\*\*\*** ☎ 2 Workers' Stadium Road North (25 km from airport, 5 km from city centre) ☎ (8610) 6500 2299 ☎ (8610) 6500 3319 **Movenpick Hotel, Beijing \*\*\*\*\*** ☎ Xiao Tianzhu Village, Shunyi County, Beijing, 100621 (5 km from airport, 20 km from city centre) ☎ (8610) 6456 5588 ☎ (8610) 6456 5678 **Tiantan Hotel \*\*\*\*\*** ☎ 1 Tiayuan Road, Chongwen District, Beijing, 100061 (35 km from airport, 3 km from city centre) ☎ (8610) 6711 2277 ☎ (8610) 6711 6833 **Qianmen Hotel \*\*\*\*\*** ☎ 175 Yongan



Road, Beijing, 100059 (29 km from airport, close to city centre) ☎ (8610) 6301 6688 🚗 (8610) 6301 3883 **Media Hotel, Beijing** \*\*\* ☎ B11 Fuxing Road, Beijing, 100859 (37 km from airport, 6 km from city centre) ☎ (8610) 6851 4422 🚗 (8610) 6851 6288 **Rainbow Hotel** \*\*\* ☎ 11 Xijing Road, Beijing, 100859 (25 km from airport, 2.5 km to city centre) ☎ (8610) 6301 2266 🚗 (8610) 6301 1366.

### Food:

All tourist hotels have both Chinese and Western restaurants. Restaurants and food stalls line the streets of major tourist spots as do fast food chains such as McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut and California Beef Noodles. For typical Beijing cuisine, try:

**Quanjude Roasted Duck Restaurant** Qianmen branch: ☎ 32 Qianmen Street ☎ 6511 2418 Hepingmen branch: ☎ 14 Qianmen Street ☎ 6301 8833 **Fanshan Restaurant (Imperial Court dishes)** ☎ Beihai Park ☎ 6501 1879 **Yushan Restaurant (Imperial Court dishes)** ☎ 87 Tiantan Road ☎ 6711 2223 **Yunlaitang (Tan Family dishes)** ☎ Beijing Hotel, Wangfujing Street ☎ 6513 7766 **Kaorouyuan (barbecue)** ☎ 102 Xunwumennei Street ☎ 6603 1700 **Kaorouji (barbecue)** ☎ 14 Qianhai Dongyan ☎ 6401 2170 **Donglaishun Restaurant (Mongolian hotpot)** ☎ 198 Wangfujing Street ☎ 6513 9661 **Yoyuishuan (Mongolian hotpot, local snacks)** ☎ 9 Xuanwumennei Street ☎ 6602 2668.

### Recreation:

**Peking Opera and local melodies: Liyuan Theatre** ☎ Qianmen Hotel, Hemingmen Wai, Yongan Road ☎ 6301 6688 **Laoshe Teahouse** 2C Qianmen Street West ☎ 6303 6830 **Tianqiao Happy Thouse** ☎ 113 Tianqiao Market ☎ 6515 8855.

**Drama:** Beijing People's Art Theatre ☎ 22 Wangfujing Street ☎ 6513 5801.

**Concerts:** Beijing Music Hall ☎ 1 Xinhua Street North (Close to Xidan on the Changan Boulevard) ☎ 6605 7006.

**Disco:** JJ Disco ☎ 76 Xinjiekou Street North ☎ 6618 9305, 6618 4816.

**Golf:** Beijing International Golf Club ☎ North of the Shisanling Reservoir, Changping County ☎ 6974 6388 Guangjitang Golf Club ☎ Shangsi Road, Chaoyang District ☎ 6507 3388.

**Taiji Boxing and Qigong Exercises:** Early in the morning, people (most of them retired) gather in parks, squares or even street gardens to do various exercises, of which taiji and qigong are the most popular. Choose a park near your hotel and join in with one of the groups, or enjoy yourself by dancing the Waltz or Yangge (a northern Chinese folk dance).

### Shopping:

Local specialties include handicrafts, jade articles, lacquerware, palace lanterns, cloisonné, masks, crystal articles and folk toys, are sold in department stores such as Sidan Shopping Centre (Xidan Street North, Tel: 6602 4695), Beijing Friendship Store (17 Jianguomenwai Street, Tel: 6500 3311), Beijing Department Store (255 Wangfujing Street, Tel: 6512 6677) and the Urban and Rural Trade Centre (Gongzhufen, Northwest,

Tel: 6821 6577).

Chinese paintings and calligraphic works, together with antiques can be found in specialised shops concentrated in Liulichang, south of Hepingmen, which has developed into the Chinese Cultural Street. Buyers interested in antiques can visit the Beijing Folk Art Flea Market at the southern section of the Third Ring Road East, in Chaoyang District.

Silk is sold in all department stores, but Ruifuxiang Silk Store at 5 Dashila Street, Qianmen and Yuanlong Guxiu Silk Store at 55 Tiantan Road are specialist shops where you may find a larger selection.

Traditional Chinese medicines are available in most pharmacies, but the following two are recommended: Beijing Tongrentang at 24 Dashila Street and Lerentang at 215 Xidan Street North.

### Useful Telephone Numbers

First aid:	120	Time:	117
Fire:	119	Tourist hotline:	6831 4971
Police:	110	Taxi hotline:	6601 2620
Weather:	121	CAAC passenger hotline:	6456 1200

**Tourism Agencies:** **China Tourism Service** ☎ 8 Dongjiao Minxiang ☎ 6512 9933 ☎ **China International Travel Service** ☎ 103 Fuxingmen Nei Street ☎ 6601 1122 **CITS Beijing Branch** ☎ 28 Jianguomen Wai Street ☎ 6515 8844 **China Youth Travel Service** ☎ 23 Dongjiao Minxiang ☎ 6524 3388

**Climate:** Autumn (from September to October) is the best time to visit when the city wears a pleasing cloak of foliage. Winter can be interesting if you don't mind the cold. There is very little rain throughout the year tending to make the capital a good place to visit anytime of year. Note that temperatures change dramatically between day and night.



### Average Temperatures:

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
°C	-4.6	-2.1	-4.7	13.0	19.9	23.6	25.8	24.4	19.1	12.2	4.3	-2.5

1. At the Folk Art Flea Market on the Third Ring Way East, you can find all kinds of second-hand antique items.
2. This snuff bottle is exquisitely painted from the inside.
3. Exploring the ancient lanes on a tricycle.





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Xing Liangkun started collecting pottery 18 years ago. At the age of 24, he took his first month's salary, the first money he had ever earned in his life, to the flea market in Dalian and bought a few pieces of old Japanese pottery and porcelain. Since then he became a frequent customer of second-hand goods shops and flea markets. Northeast China was once occupied by the Japanese for a long time, who left behind their influence in the many Japanese pottery and porcelain vessels scattered amongst the local people. Xing made these Japanese ceramics the main focus of his collection. Within ten years he had collected over 2,000 pieces, and became the largest collector of Japanese pottery and porcelain vessels in China. Among his collection is the Four Happiness Vase, which is a rare treasure, even in Japan, and the Five-Coloured Phoenix Vase produced by the contemporary potter Kura Shuntei, which is considered an artistic wonder of Japanese ceramics. In 1989 and 1990, Xing displayed his private collection of Japanese pottery and porcelain vessels at exhibitions in Dalian and Shenyang respectively.

F O C U S

# XING LIANGKUN AND HIS CERAMIC WORLD

*Photos by Wang Dabin*

*Article by Hong Yan and Wang Dabin*

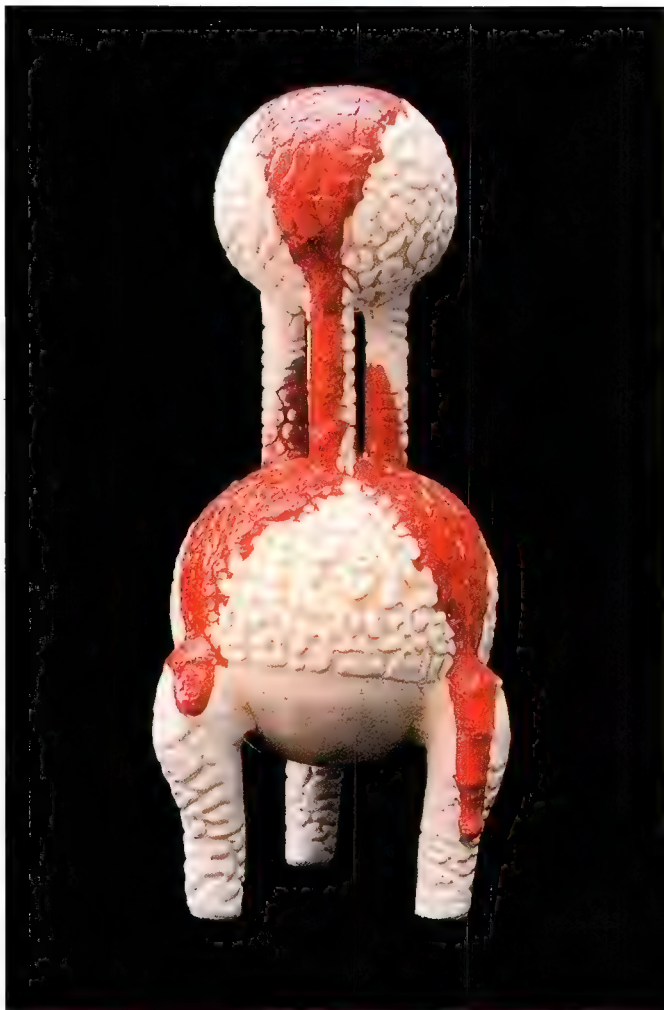


## From Imitation to Creation

In May 1989, Xing made a decision to donate his collection to the government. He had been collecting for ten years, and the total pieces by this time were estimated to have a value of 1 million yuan. He started work on building a his own kiln, aiming to produce his own pottery in the style of the ancients. After three months' practice, the potteries he made began to be picked up by the antiques market. Each of them looked like a genuine archaeological find. However, unsatisfied with merely imitating existing antique works, he decided to produce objects of his own creation. Explaining the reasons behind his shift from collector to potter, Xing said: "Great happiness lies not in possession but in creation."

Inspired by a legendary piece of ceramic art which no longer existed, he attempted to reproduce it. This rare pottery figure, which had belonged to the Qing Dynasty, was said to have had a revolving ball inside its mouth, which could be seen and turned round but could not be removed. After many attempts, Xing finally succeeded in producing a vase with a ten-layer revolving interior. Another skill he perfected and further developed was furnace transmutation. It is the mysterious transformation of glaze at high temperatures when pottery is being fired in the kiln.

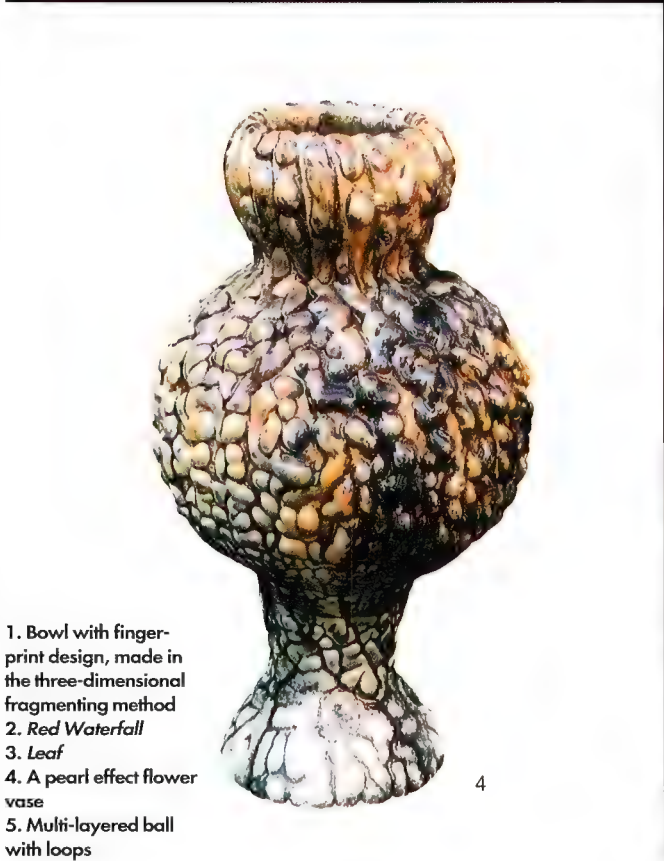




2



3



4

1. Bowl with finger-print design, made in the three-dimensional fragmenting method
2. Red Waterfall
3. Leaf
4. A pearl effect flower vase
5. Multi-layered ball with loops



5



Its outcome is very hard to control. To master this technique, Xing worked with what he knew of an ancient "fragmenting" skill, and invented the "three-dimensional fragmenting method" characterised by cracks in the glaze that come up in relief. This breakthrough earned him a patent from the state for invention. But Xing wanted to go beyond the traditional method of glazing. He tried to find a medium which could control glaze and make it spurt at a certain high temperature. After repeated experiments he succeeded, firing a pottery he entitled *Red Waterfall*.

His other masterpiece, *Red Sky Eyes*, was created by accident when he made an error in glazing and firing. Within a short period of three years Xing created 12 techniques in the field of pottery, eight of which have patents from the state.

### Collected by Palace Museum

In October 1994, an exhibition of Xing's work was held in the China Art Gallery in Beijing, at which nearly 1,000 earthenware pieces were displayed. Shortly afterwards, the Palace Museum in Beijing which as a rule does not gather contemporary pottery works produced after 1894, decided to make an exception with Xing's work, and bought 11 of his pottery vessels. They included a red bowl made in the three-dimensional fragmenting method, a bowl with white line design on a dark background, a bowl with worn design, a vase with reticulated exterior and independently revolving interior, and *Leaf*, a hanging ornament.

Xing's earthenware can be divided into three categories. In the first category are objects (mainly tea bowls) modelled on daily utensils. These tea bowls vary greatly in shape. Some of them are decorated with relief carvings, some have a surface resembling old tree bark or cracked earth, and others resemble a hundred flowing streams.

The second category includes traditional art works blended with his unique creativity. He has made vases with reticulated exteriors and independently revolving interiors. Some, combine circular carving, relief decoration and colour glazing. They are both traditional and modern, with features echoing folk art. One example is the rare vase with ten-layers, currently housed in the Palace Museum. In the

shape of a bottle gourd, it has ten independently revolving hollow balls, one inside the other, and all ten balls are visible through an aperture. Such a structure has never been seen before in earthenware.

The third consists of masks, human and animal figures, distinguished for their value as progressive art. Xing's ox, horse, worm and human masks are both original and crude, abstract and concrete, fully demonstrating the artist's unusual power of imagination.

Translated by Xiong Zhenru



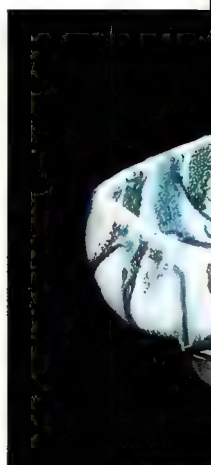
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1. Carved porcelain vase
2. The kiln Xing Liangkun built with his own hands



3

3. Xing Liangkun's pottery  
works collected by the  
Lüshun Museum





# SPICY BEEF NOODLES – LANZHOU FLAVOUR

During my visit to Lanzhou, I had some noodles with sliced beef in a clear soup. They were so good that I still dream about them. As soon as I entered the ancient city of Lanzhou on the Yellow River, it seemed I had been haunted by their spicy aroma.

The people of Lanzhou have had a liking for the noodles since the Guangxu Reign of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), initiated by a Hui cook by the name of Ma Baozi. Later, his descendants developed the technique of

making noodles and made it widely known throughout the city. In Lanzhou today noodle restaurants are everywhere, and everyone loves to eat noodles. The local people say, "We feel frustrated if we don't eat a bowl of beef noodles at least every three days." This sounds a bit of an exaggeration, but it shows these noodles have become an indispensable part of Lanzhou life.

Making Lanzhou noodles with sliced beef doesn't simply mean to cook ordinary noodles





together with beef. In fact, the technique is very skilful. First the best wheat flour is chosen. Usually the wheat flour dough is made the previous day. A strong man then pounds, kneads, pulls, beats and throws the dough time and time again onto the kneading board. The dough is then kneaded into a rectangular slab and flattened into pieces of the thickness of a tea cup and the length of a chop-stick, each of which is then drawn into different types of noodle according to the wishes of the customers – thick, not so thick, thin and angel-hair thin.

The drawing of noodles is a unique skill. Watching the cook draw noodles is like watching the performance of an acrobat. At



3

and chicken. After the clear soup is ready, some cooked radish slices and condiments

are added to it. Finally, the soup is poured into a bowl on top of the cooked noodles, followed by some sliced beef, coriander, garlic and chilli oil, and there we have a bowl of delicious Lanzhou noodles with sliced beef in clear soup!

The spicy, delicious beef

and in an instant the noodles vanish into their stomachs. However, if you go to Jinding Noodles Restaurant on Pingliang Road, you will learn a lot about the noodle culture. The noodles are much the same as elsewhere, but the environment and the sets of dishes are particularly good here. You can order bowls of noodles costing three, five or eight yuan a bowl. It is said that this restaurant has set up many chains around the country.

In China there is hardly a city which does not have a noodle restaurant serving Lanzhou noodles, but they do not taste the same as those in Lanzhou despite all claims of cooking them from the orthodox school. If anyone wants to eat the true Lanzhou noodles with sliced beef in clear soup, it is always available in Lanzhou.

Photos by Xie Guanghui

Article by He Xiaozu

Translated by Xiong Zhenru



4

the final stage, the cook waves the long noodles up and down in the air like a dancer waving coloured ribbons.

The true quality of the Lanzhou noodles with sliced beef depends largely on the clear soup. Lanzhou people like to try the soup before they taste the noodles. With a



5

mouthful of soup, they assess the quality of the meal – if the soup is good, so are the noodles. The soup is made without soy sauce by stewing fat, tender beef together with the head and leg bones of a cow; some cooks also prepare a broth made from cow's liver

noodles are available in every restaurant in Lanzhou so there is no need to check the menu board outside the restaurant first. Most Lanzhou inhabitants do not care where or how they eat their noodles. A bowl of noodles in hand, they just squat down on the ground,

1. Hot pepper is an important ingredient of Lanzhou Beef Noodles. (by Chan Yat Nin)
2. The making of noodles is like waving long ribbons in the air.
3. A bowl of delicious noodles with side dishes
4. The beef soup
5. A noodle restaurant in Lanzhou



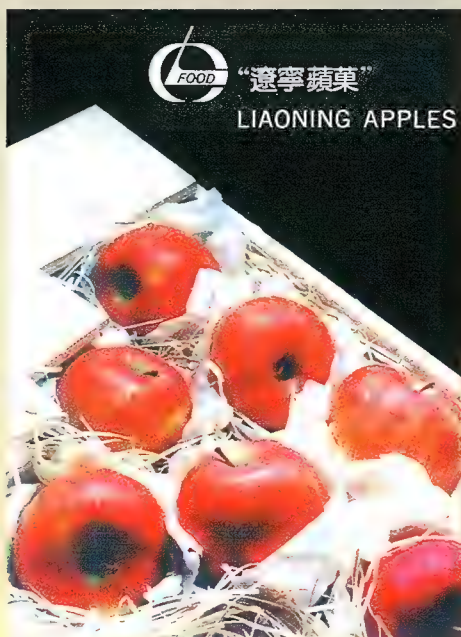


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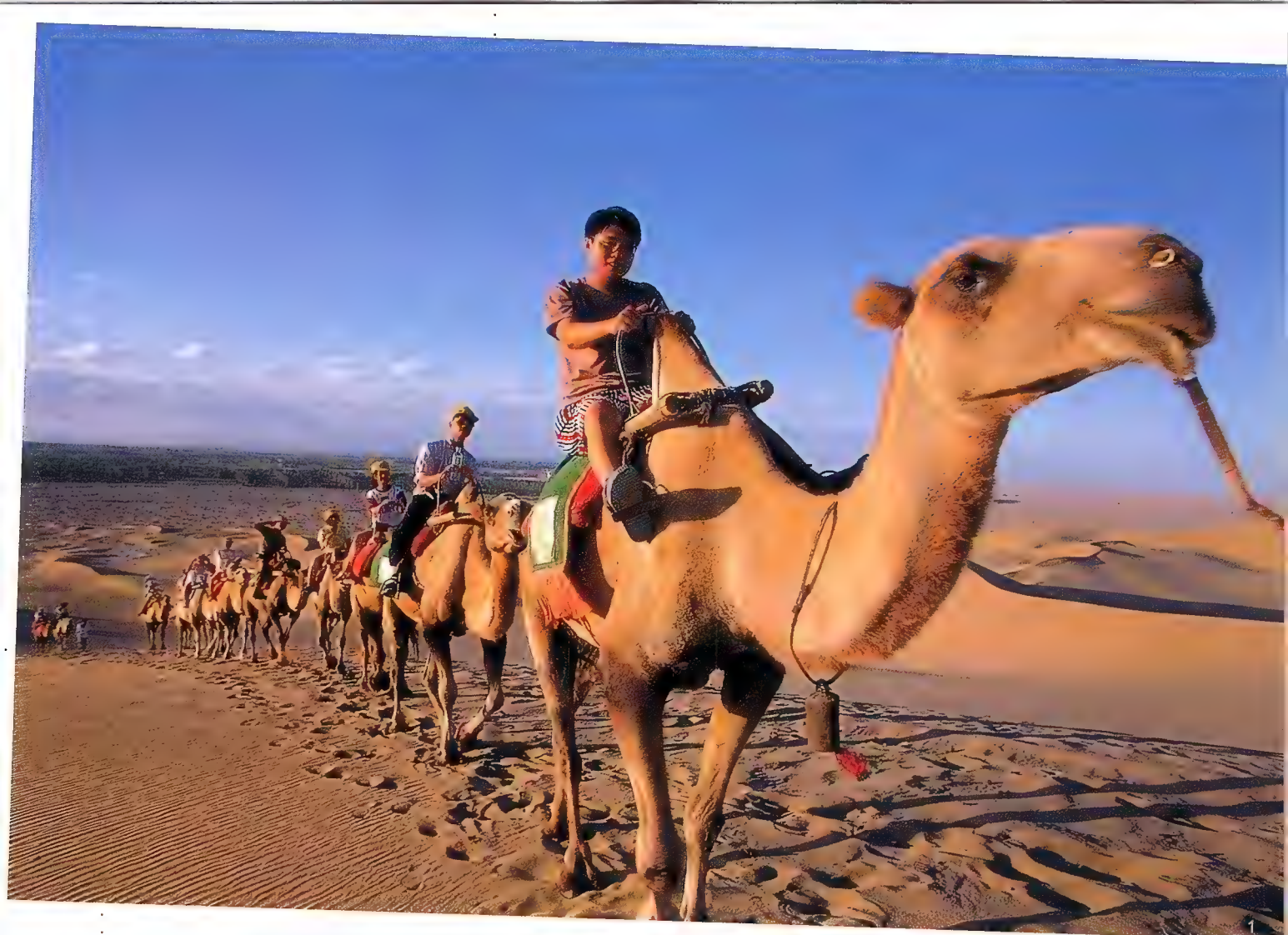
A C T I O N

# Playing on the Fantastic Sand Dunes

*Photos & Article by Xie Guanghui*







1



2

1. One feels secure between the humps of the camel as one rocks along in rhythm with it.
2. A bottle of mineral water doesn't last long.
3. No one wants to be left behind.
4. As high as a 30-storey building, it takes only a dozen seconds to slide down this sand slope.
5. It takes courage to slide down the hill for the first time.



3



Dunhuang, Gansu Province, is a small town with a population of little over 60,000, yet, every year it welcomes as many as 500,000 travellers, most of whom come to see the superb Buddhist art on view in the nearby Mogao Grottoes and the enjoyable Mingsha (Sounding Sand) Hill. The best season for playing on the Mingsha Hill is from July to September. The temperature of the sand may reach 70°C during the day, but at night it becomes cold enough that you have to put a sweater on. The sun usually sets



4

around 10 p.m., so many people prefer to go to Mingsha Hill after supper.

### Tamed Camels That Everybody Can Ride

Mingsha Hill lies six kilometres south of Dunhuang. Scarcely out of the town we saw the giant sand dunes stretching for several dozen kilometres streaked by the shadows of the setting sun. Here and there small green trees and camel thorn bushes dotted the foot of the dunes. The tinkling of bells heralded a huge herd of camels gathering on a piece of land half the size of a football pitch. The romance of journeying along the ancient Silk Road was brought to mind as we rode on the "good – natured" animals. Sitting between its two humps I felt safe and found it much easier than riding a horse.

Turning a col, our vista suddenly broadened as we saw the Yueya (Crescent) Spring nestled among the giant sand dunes of the Mingsha Hill. At the bottom of the huge sand basin, was a limpid pool in the shape of a crescent moon embedded in an oasis roughly the same shape. It was so enchanting that we felt as if we had entered a fairy-tale world.

### Secret for Overcoming Thirst

Upon seeing the Mingsha Hill no tourist

could wait to climb up it. Taking off their shoes, they raced toward it barefooted. It was not because they feared getting sand into their shoes that they took them off, rather, they could not resist the temptation of feeling the soft, clean sand between their toes. Even travellers who were used to beaches back home got very excited and played endlessly with the sand.

Climbing up the sand hill is not as easy as one imagines because one slight touch makes the sand underfoot slide away, and the more effort one makes the quicker one slides down. Exhausted, people crawl up on hand and foot.

Not only is it tiring – it's thirsty work too. A bottle of mineral water does not last very long. The best tactic is to be slow and patient. When you feel tired, lie down where you are and take a short rest to get your breath back, you can then get up and continue. In this way, it took us more than half an hour to climb up the Mingsha Hill which was only as high as a 30-storey building. On the top of the hill, we were amazed by the sight of the vast expanse of desert spread out before us under the golden sun; it appeared calm and graceful, looking like a vast immovable sea. What a magnificent sight!

On top of the hill land parachuting and parachute gliding were offered. With the first, one simply needs to run down the slope clutching the rope on either side, and as the wind catches the parachute it lifts you up and

down, like a weightless astronaut walking on the moon. It is really good fun. Parachute gliding is done by a machine and you are lifted 100 metres into the air, just like a kite. Many young people had a go.

### Mingsha Hill Never Loses Height, Yueya Spring Always Exists

The sport most tourists like to try is sand sliding, which is very simple. All you need to do is to pay five yuan to rent a wooden sleigh. Having sat on it, you give a slight push with your hands and the sleigh glides down to the foot of the hill in a few seconds. The sleigh throws up lot of sand, similar to water skiing.

People also find it very amusing to run down the slope. One would think oneself is bound to tumble when running down such a precipitous slope. In fact, after just a few steps, one begins to slide down with the moving sand for several metres – only to find oneself still standing perfectly steady. As the sand floats down with you, it produces a faint yet audible sound, which is precisely the reason why the hill is called Mingsha (Sounding Sand).

It seems strange that the hill has managed to retain its height since for centuries numerous people have played with the sand and the whole area is swept by constant winds. Moreover, so much sand has floated down the slope over the years that it should have filled the Yueya Spring long ago.



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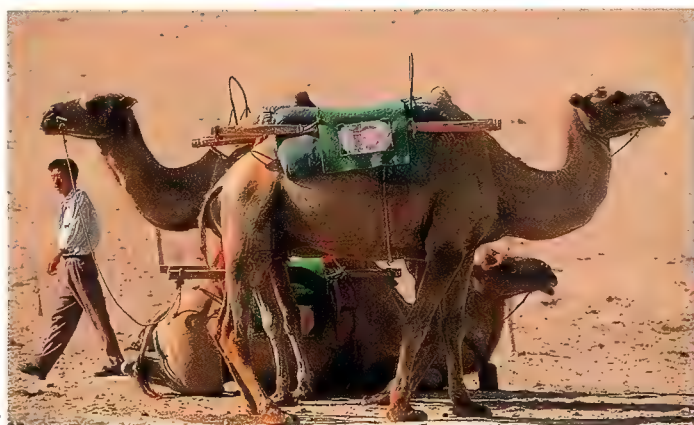
Yet, it has not. Why? Careful observation reveals the answer. The pool is surrounded by high sand dunes on three sides, leaving a fairly wide opening in the direction of Northeast. This is the passage by which travellers enter and leave the oasis. As the wind enters the area it changes direction to blow over the inner slopes of the surrounding hills, blowing sand up the slopes. When the wind is strong enough, it can even push the sand over the top of the hills to the other side. This is the secret of how the Mingsha Hill has never reduced its height and why the Yueya Spring has never filled up.

Coming down from the Mingsha Hill, we became extremely thirsty. So, we went to a newly built pavilion by the Yueya Spring to have a cup of tea. The pool, thick with water plants, looked very limpid. We felt as if we were sitting by the Longjing (Dragon Well) Spring in Hangzhou. 

*Translated by Li Zhenguo*

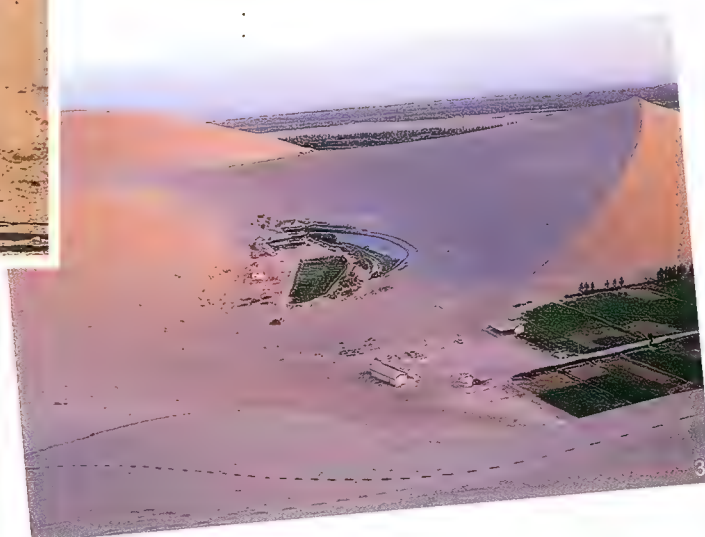


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1. It is thrilling to float at a height of 100 metres.
2. Camels are the best means of desert transport, hence their local name "boats in the desert".
3. The Yueya Pool and the Mingsha Hill are two seemingly opposing natural phenomena, yet here they form a perfect entity.
4. There are more than 200 camels at the Mingsha Mill tourist resort. By dusk every day, they have all been rented out.



3



# TIPS FOR TRAVEL TO DUNHUANG

## Transportation

**Air:** Every week there are flights to Dunhuang from Beijing, Xi'an, Lanzhou and Urümqi. Dunhuang Airport is only 12 kilometres away from the city centre and it only takes 15 minutes to reach the hotels from the airport via the Anxi-Dunhuang highway.

**Train:** A good way to appreciate the natural landscape of the province. Get off at Liuyuan Station, a major station on the Lanzhou-Xinjiang Railway, linking Urümqi in the west to Lanzhou in the east. The line also connects with various major cities, including Xi'an, Zhengzhou, Beijing and Shanghai. All the trains have soft and hard berths as well as common seats. If you want to get a ticket for soft or hard berth, you must book beforehand through a local hotel or travel agency.

**Bus:** If you have enough time and want to see the natural scenery and places of historical interest in the Hexi Corridor in north-western Gansu, an ideal way is to take a long-distance

bus from Lanzhou to Dunhuang.

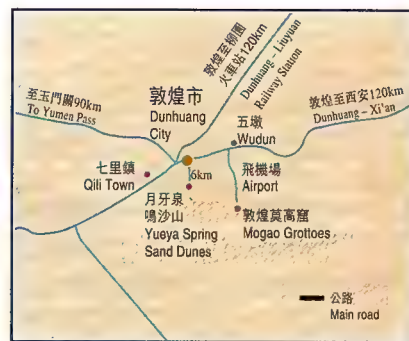
Mini buses operate a service from Dunhuang to the Mogao Grottoes and the Mingsha Hill, yet most of them do not have a regular schedule. Therefore, most visitors prefer to go by taxi. The cost to and from the Mogao Grottoes, including waiting time, is 100 yuan; a return journey to the Mingsha Hill is 30 yuan.

## Accommodation

Dunhuang offers more than 100 hotels and hostels, including three-star hostels such as Dunhuang Hotel, Dunhuang Mountain Villa and Dunhuang International Hotel with a rate ranging between 400-500 yuan per night. A medium-class hotel like the Lingyan Hotel costs around 120 yuan per night, while the hostels cost about 40-50 yuan per night.

## Climate

Dunhuang has a typical arid continental grassland climate. Springtime is windy, the summer is scorching hot, the autumn is cool



with a great difference between day and night temperatures, while the winter is very cold with the lowest being -9.3°C. The best time to visit Mingsha Hill is during July, August and September.

## Food

In Dunhuang there are more than 200 restaurants and eateries of all sizes. The local delicacies include brewed sweet jelly (made from bean or sweat potato starch), yellow noodles, roast ram with Chinese tamarisk and "snow mountain" camel pad, for the latter, the most famous place is Dunhuang Hotel.





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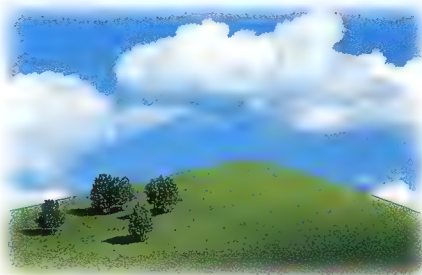
ence, a photographer has recorded scenes on the vast land of **Xinjiang**. The



Yang Chengan

pictures, together with a story telling how they were shot, will be presented in the column **DISCOVERIES**.

**Bashang**,



Jing Ping

was once the

a land of 10,000 square kilometres in North China,

emperors' hunting ground; today, the beautiful



Wu Pingquan

scenery displays its peaceful charm. Through the 230-kilometre

**Wuwei-Dunhuang Race** an amateur group of racing car

enthusiasts comprehend the meaning of life. **PEOPLES** column

introduces another of China's ethnic minorities, the **Miao**

who are famous for their characteristic costumes and their art.



Chan Yat Nin



## Hebei Forest Park, Hebei

The Songningba Primeval Forest Park, recently opened in Fengning County in Hebei Province, covers 2,409 hectares of land. It is home to many primeval plants, various kinds of wildlife and 200-year-old species of trees. Hills, caves, unusual stones and springs constitute unique natural scenery and fruit trees and herbs grow in abundance.

## Giant Jade Stone, Liaoning

A 260-ton seven-coloured soapstone, discovered in Youyan County, Liaoning Province in 1960 is to be housed in a specially designed park in Anshan featuring lakes and ponds. The soapstone, 7.95 metres in height and 6.88 metres in width, is the world's largest piece of jade. The second largest weighs 30 to 40 tons and was discovered in Myanmar.

## Hainan National Forest Park

Jianfengling (Pointed Steep Peak) National Forest Park in western Hainan Island has China's largest and best-preserved tropical rain forest and over 40 natural scenic attractions. Visitors there can go fishing and camping and do mountain sports. There are also several other forests such as Bawangling, Diaoluoshan and Limushan in the western part. The area is inhabited by ethnic minority groups. The provincial government is to give preference to investors in its bid to develop forest tourism.

## Imperial Harem, Shenyang

The living quarters of the first Qing emperors' imperial concubines in the Palace Museum in Shenyang have been renovated and opened to the public. Different from the Han architectural style of the Forbidden City in Beijing, the

large palaces stand on four-metre-high stone platforms, higher than the official palaces in the Imperial City. Before the renovation, the quarters, built in the style of the Manchu minority, were used to host exhibitions of imperial relics.

## City Ruins Discovered on Yangtse, Sichuan

City ruins dating back some 4,500 to 5,000 years have been found along the upper reaches of the Yangtse River, an area that was previously thought to have been slower in developing a civilisation.

Chinese archaeologists say that the find marks a break from the traditional view that there was no record of cities before the first dynasty was set up in the 21st Century B.C. on the upper reaches of the Yangtse River.

The find is proof that the area is one of the origins of China's 5,000-year-old civilisation.

Remains of cities were found scattered around present-day Xinjin, Dujiangyan, Wenjiang and Poxian counties on the Chengdu Plain in Southwest China's Sichuan Province. Scholars have found characteristics common to all the cities, which lie parallel to rivers, built on a large platform with walls made of rammed earth.

Previously, the earliest city site found in the areas was Sanxingdui from some 3,000 to 4,000 years ago, where a great number of unique bronzes have been unearthed, such as a mask with protruding eyes.

## Giant Salamanders

Two giant salamanders are still doing well in the Shahu Aquarium in Northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, four years after they were netted in Shahu Lake. The larger of the two was netted by fishermen in 1992 and the smaller one less than a month later in the semi-saline lake, which is surrounded by

desert. Giant salamanders are given top State protection and have been found living in the fresh waters of southern China. These two are the first ever found in waters above the 38th parallel in China.

## Modern Herdsmen, Inner Mongolia

The central Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region are employing modern, intensive live-stock-raising techniques to improve traditional animal husbandry which is inefficient and has ruined grasslands by overgrazing. In the past nomadic herdsmen have led their over-abundant and underfed livestock across the vast prairies, stripping the land and then moving on to fresh pasture.

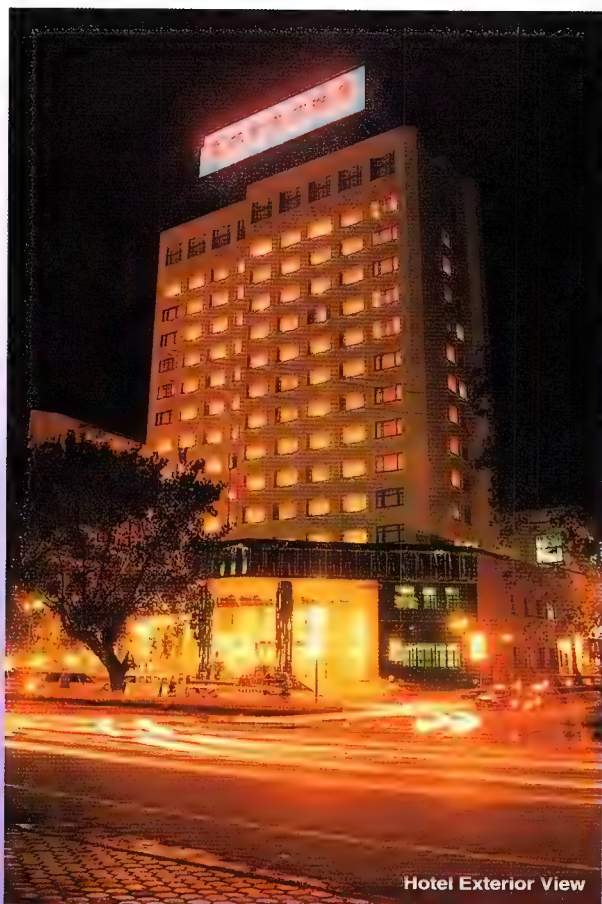
By adopting modern techniques used elsewhere in China and beyond, the Xilin Gol League government approved a test project in 1993 to modernise animal husbandry on the grasslands. The first step was to develop intensive livestock raising by settled families. The next was to ensure the protective usage of grasslands in an effort to rejuvenate and improve the grasslands. That was followed by breeding to improve the quality of the livestock and to fatten the animals in as short a time as possible.

Over the last three years, 3,000 households in the league have been trained to use the new methods and by the year 2010, the 10,000 households now raising livestock on the grasslands are expected to reach the average production level of that in Australia, Argentina and New Zealand.

## Zhuhai Formula One Racing

Zhuhai's newly completed 4.32 km Formula One race track hosted the Marlboro China Zhuhai International Race '96 recently. It is China's very first world-class circuit.





Hotel Exterior View



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# JOURNEY TO JIAOZI SNOW MOUNTAIN

I had heard tales about the Jiaozi (Sedan Chair) Snow Mountain in Luquan county from previous travellers: arrivals at twilight, no clearly marked paths in sight, ascents of the snow covered mountain on hands and knees, their tour guides incessantly giving them well intended, but misleading, information about the closeness of warm shelter.... The story goes that one was so happy to arrive he actually kissed the ice covered ground.

I am an independent sort of a traveller, so, well-equipped and prepared for the worst, I started out one dark winter morning and hopped onto one of the public buses heading north from Kunming, Yunnan Province.

## In Search of the Way

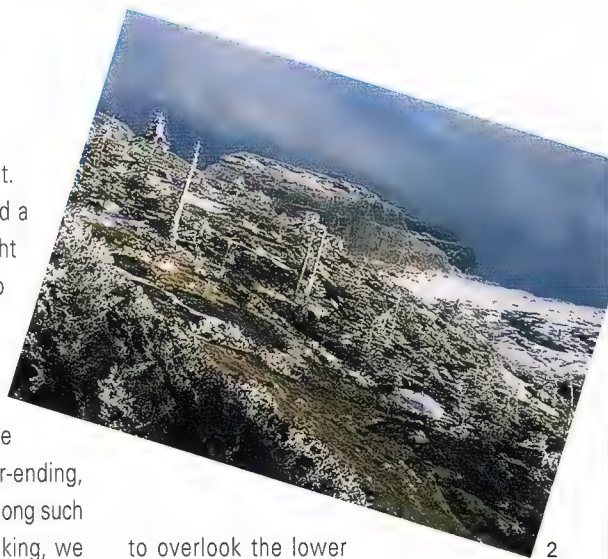
After a couple of hours of monotonous rattling, the bus suddenly came to a halt; the driver proclaiming that I had arrived at

no snow mountain anywhere in sight.

Looking around, we discovered a small wooden sign with small bright red letters Jiaozi Xueshan pointing to the north-east. Exactly what we had been hoping to find!

Thus we followed the main road, which snaked its way along the mountain ranges. It seemed never-ending, and we soon were tired of walking along such an ordinary track. Eager to start hiking, we decided to take a short cut. But which one?

Anticipating to catch a glimpse of the Jiaozi Snow Mountain soon, we finally headed up the best path, deciding we would correct our navigational mistakes once we reached the top. However, the landscape we crossed, showed no signs of the expected snow nor ice. Instead we found ourselves in



my destination. I stared in amazement.

Some Chinese mountaineers and I were quite reluctant to get off the bus at this ghostly looking cross road, since there was

bushes of rhododendrons with wild camellias standing out from the otherwise barely vegetated countryside.

The altitude we had reached enabled us

to overlook the lower mountain ranges. One side was untouched and completely covered in pine trees, the other, however, had been deprived of natural protection. Intense logging, or maybe simply the incessant blowing of this freezing cold wind, had left the surface of the slopes destroyed and mutilated. We set off quickly in search of some wind shelter for ourselves.

Up until now we hadn't seen a clearly marked track, nor a single representative of China's legendary huge population – there was not a soul in sight. Where were we to go from here?

Without any means of asking the way, we randomly followed what one might term a once well-trodden path. After an hour or so, we encountered the only creatures who had recently set foot on this pathway: a herd of mountain goats. They bleated loudly upon our approach, but at the same time appeared to be laughing hysterically. Their mockery seemed to grow as the four of us failed miserably to master a notably steep and slippery part of the route. Not long after, we found the reason for their apparent delight: The path was a dead end! With no way to continue, we had to retrace our steps.

Where was the proper ascent? We be-



came a little nervous and impatient as the sun's warmth began to dissipate and we were still wandering around in no-man's land. Eyes fixed to the ground, we searched for fresh human footprints in the now ice-covered mud. Suddenly I had an overwhelming sense of the power of nature. I began tuning into my inner voice rather than heeding logic, and for a split second I began using my animal instincts to track down the scent of my predecessors.... Not too long ago horses must have passed here.

Before our departure, we had been told it was possible to ride up to the mountain by horse, but hadn't given it a second thought. Now, however, we had reached the stage where we were willing to give anything to meet one of those horse guides – and amazingly, we did! Our happiness at running into these locals with their four legged friends was genuine and seemed mutual, until we realised these young men apparently wanted us to use their horses. We had started out on foot, and we would finish on foot; none of us were that exhausted that we were willing to mount one of those pitiful looking animals. The horsemen gave up on us, and sat down to light their cigarettes – obviously it was time for a break. An hour of silent criss-cross hiking followed during which fresh animal droppings represented our only symbol of hope. We took turns to lead the way contemplating the unknown physical challenges still ahead of us.

### My Daydreaming

I don't know about the others – did they also start daydreaming? I felt like a piece of weightless cloud, drifting through the atmosphere. My legs were moving automatically, the constant tiring movement put me into a state resembling that of deep meditation. My mind alternated between being deluged with hundreds of thoughts and then complete blankness. The sun threw long shadows over our heads, and our excitement seemed to vanish, but we knew that panicking would be useless. I have learned to think

positively in such situations.

Suddenly, we heard a loud cry! Abruptly the four of us stopped.... Some people! In the far distance we could make out several fellow mountaineers engaged in a snow-ball fight. We would just follow them! As if conducted by an invisible leader, we started waving wildly and yelled until the others interrupted their game. They waved back, probably equally astonished at seeing some bright jackets standing out against the drab background of the mountain slopes. We felt injected with renewed energy.

The sun was setting, but we didn't feel the sudden drop in temperature – our state of mind had a thermodynamic effect on our bodies. We began joking about hot baths, warm comfortable beds and wishing for our favourite dishes to be served that night. We were thirsty, but had already run out of water, so we ate snow. I was so hungry that my head was aching. We had food but unfortunately we had no time to unpack our precious provisions. The only solution was to get to the hostel as quickly as possible. But in fact, we were walking slower than before, the track was covered with snow which had melted and then re-frozen, making it very slippery. Wading through the knee-deep snow on either side of the track wasn't a plausible solution either, since our clothes would only become soaking wet with, most likely, no means of drying them overnight. Proceeding cautiously we felt our way along, holding on to every branch and shrub in order not to fall. The last kilometre was the hardest. We were chilled to the bone, trying desperately to move more rapidly, but nature had set its own rules.

Finally at our destination, we didn't arrive



3

crawling on our hands and knees. We were upright, but more slipping and sliding than walking onto safe ground. A warm welcome melted our hearts. Immediately we went to our rooms which, from the outside, reminded me of ski-huts in the European Alps. I immediately felt at home. Our costly, but well deserved dinner thereafter was delicious, too. That evening we had just one last wish, to slide into bed and fall asleep immediately and dream sweet dreams.

The next morning the sight of the previous night's tea frozen into solid ice at the bottom of our cups made us shiver. Finally the contents of our back packs were put to use as we dressed in a spare set of long johns, woollen socks and jumpers, getting ready for the last leg of our ascent. It would be a further 200 metres to the very top of the 3,970-metre-high Jiaozi Snow Mountain.

Apparently, the scenery there casts a magical spell on every visitor. From our huts we could already see the frozen icicles of waterfalls we would pass, the morning sun already accentuating their spectacular, luminescent blue. What would the lake on the plateau look like? Would we discover any species of the famous Yunnan Snow Tea?... But that's another story!



*Photos & Article by Andrea Stelzner*

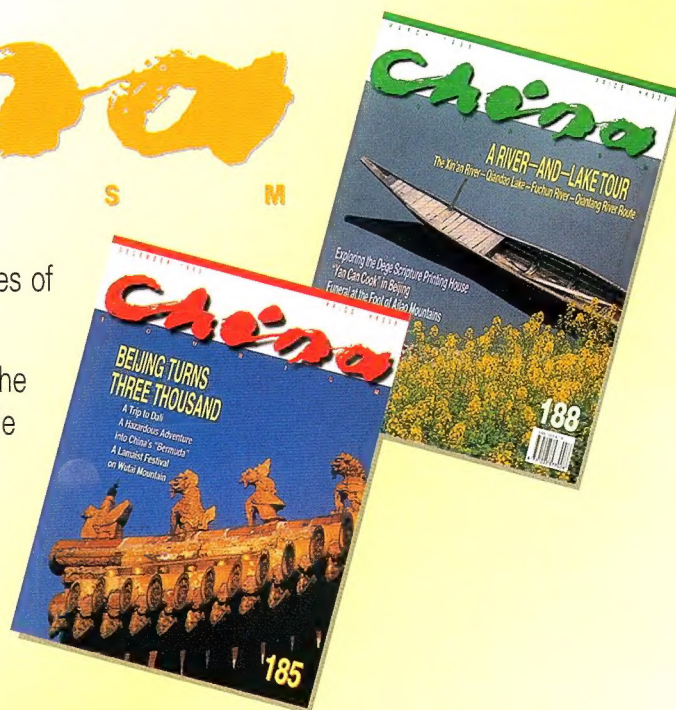
1. Jiaozi Snow Mountain
2. The tracks were covered with snow which had melted and re-frozen.
3. We were so happy to come across some locals.



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